SOCIAL IDEALISM AND THE CHANGING THEOLOGY

GERALD BIRNEY SMITH

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SOCIAL IDEALISM AND THE CHANGING THEOLOGY

A STUDY OF THE ETHICAL ASPECTS OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

The Nathaniel William Taylor Lectures for 1912
Delivered before the Yale Divinity School

BY

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TO

My Father

THE MEMORY OF WHOSE INFLUENCE

WILL EVER GUIDE MY IDEALS

AND WHOSE LIFE

FIRST DISCLOSED TO ME

THE ETHICAL MEANING OF CHRISTIANITY

PREFACE

This volume contains the substance of the lectures which were delivered on the Nathaniel William Taylor foundation at the Spring conference of alumni of Yale Divinity School and ministers of Connecticut at New Haven in April, 1912. After they had been delivered, it seemed best to profit by the comments of those who heard them, and to gain the advantage of criticisms on the part of two or three friends who were good enough to read the manuscript. As a result, some minor changes have been made so as to avoid misinterpretation in one or two points; but the substance of the discussion remains practically unchanged. The final lecture of the course, which was too long to be read in its entirety, has here been divided and slightly expanded in order to give space for a more detailed exposition.

It has for some time seemed to the author that the theological scholarship of our day is in danger of pursuing a course which might end in a somewhat exclusive intellectualism. As the progress of biblical criticism has compelled us to reconstruct our conception of the way in which the Bible is to be used, the appeal to the Bible, which to Luther seemed so simple and democratic a matter, has become hedged in with considerations of critical scholarship difficult for those who are not specialists to comprehend. While theologians have been giving attention to the problems created by this phase of scholarship, the movements of life in our day have brought to the front aspects of the social question sadly needing the guidance and the control which can be supplied only by an ethical religion. The utterances of theology, in so far as it has followed traditional paths, have been somewhat remote from these pressing moral questions of social justice.

Now the ethics underlying traditional theology is aristocratic. It has been assumed that truth must be formulated by a higher wisdom, to the authority of which men must submit. This aristocratic conception of social guidance was formerly characteristic of all realms of human enterprise. It still dominates much of our thinking. But it is becoming increasingly evident that the ethical sympathies of our age are with the immanent rights of man to discover truth for himself and to try such experiments as he wishes to make. In political life we have frankly abandoned the ideal of government from above, and are engaged in the task of educating men to an adequate appreciation of the ethical principles of democracy. Our industrial progress is taking us in the direction of increased democratic rights in the daily toil of men. In our religious life also it is proving more and more difficult to enforce the ethical tenets which belonged to the age of aristocratic control. Dissent is today widespread and for the most part goes undisciplined. The ethics of modern democracy increasingly rule our practice in religion as well as in political and industrial life.

Thus there is a discrepancy between the ethical principles which were embodied in the traditional theology and the principles underlying our actual practice. There is a real danger lest the practical disregard of the ecclesiastical ethics which is still formally proclaimed may lead to a weakened sense of moral loyalty, and may thus prove disastrous to the cause of Christianity. If theology is to have any part in the social and ethical reconstruction which is before us, it must learn to appreciate and to use the ethical principles which are coming to be dominant in our age. The purpose of these lectures is to show how and why the change from aristocratic to democratic ideals has taken place, and to indicate wherein an understanding of the significance of this ethical evolution may aid in the reconstruction of theology. It is hoped that when this is clearly apprehended by theologians and ministers, the reconstruction of religious beliefs may be more closely related to the great problems of social ethics now looming so large, and needing the help which a positive religious faith can supply.

It is impossible to indicate in detail my indebtedness to others in working out the considerations which have found a place in these lectures. Mention should be made, however, of the stimulus and the insight due to the marked ethical and social emphasis of my colleagues in both the theological and the philosophical faculties of the University of Chicago, as they have helped me through published works and through the more intimate means of personal conversation.

CHICAGO, *October* 12, 1912.

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INTRODUCTION

Intelligent people are well aware of the pressing necessity for a re-examination of the principles and contents of Christian theology in our day. The task of reconstruction is being undertaken by many gifted minds, and has been making gratifying progress in recent years. There is in existence today a considerable literature of power and insight dealing with various aspects of the present theological situation. But in spite of the positive contributions which are being made in the direction of a more effective and convincing presentation of our Christian beliefs, there is still a widespread feeling that a "new" theology is not as powerful an agent for the promotion of the religious life as is the traditional system of doctrine.

The principal reason for this popular distrust is, it is true, the inherited feeling that loyalty to the system of revealed truth is of superior moral quality to the spirit of critical investigation which is so ready to engage in "destructive" speculation. Thus there is a genuinely moral motive back of the utterances of those who distrust reforming movements in the realm of theological beliefs. The critical scholars, on the other hand, are too generally concerned with the intellectual aspects of their problems to allow the moral ideals of popular opinion to weigh heavily. They feel that loyalty to the truth, wherever that loyalty may lead, is the self-evident pathway to genuine and permanently constructive efforts. They are thus likely to be impatient with the objections of the man who believes in a perfect and finished system of revealed truth. Thus because neither side completely understands the motives of the other, there is likely to ensue a misunderstanding which may have deplorable consequences. It would be a calamity if the piety of the churches and the learning of the schools were to become so alienated from each other that the organized institutions of religion were willing to forego the scientific criticism and guidance which scholarship can furnish, and if the work of the scholars were to find no direct outlet into the religious activities of our day.

For the glory of Christianity is really in the ethical character of its theology. Jesus apprehended and interpreted religion in the homely and intimate realms of character and conduct rather than in the field of abstract doctrine. Such doctrinal reforms as he contemplated were due to moral rather than to intellectual considerations. The power of the religion which calls itself by his name lies in its ethical supremacy. The theology of the early Christians was not the chief means of winning converts. There were rival forms of religion with equally impressive intellectual systems. But Christianity brought the compelling force of great moral ideals suffused with religious dynamic. As we trace the history of our religion, we take most pride in the splendid ethical reformations of theology which enabled it to appeal with new power to men.

A reformed theology which does no more than satisfy intellectual interests must inevitably prove itself unable to carry the great missionary and evangelical enterprises so essential to Christianity. Perhaps one of the chief dangers which lies before us today in our efforts to reconstruct our theology is that we may forget that too exclusive attention to the purely scientific or intellectual aspects of the work of reconstruction will mean a theology which becomes a mere phase of general culture. As such, it will claim the interest of only a cultured few, and will thus become essentially aristocratic. Indeed, there are not wanting signs of popular disregard for a theology which takes visible pride in a superior scientific equipment, if that superior equipment unduly values matters of critical accuracy without a corresponding sensitiveness to the great universal spiritual needs of men. Is "higher criticism" really succeeding in creating a more vital, virile faith? Or is it putting to the front the necessity for cautious and careful accuracy in matters of historical fact so as to induce a feeling that it is not wise or possible to be dogmatically certain of some of the truths by which our fathers lived, and in the strength of which they marched to victory? There is a real danger that the inherent moral strength of critical scholarship may not be appreciated either by those who are engaged in the work of scholarship or by those who fear the introduction of the critical method into the exposition of religious truth. The discussion which follows will attempt an evaluation of the ethical aspects of theological reconstruction, in the hope of disclosing a genuine moral dynamic in the methods of critical scholarship which are being so generally adopted in our theological study.

A further word as to the particular moral perplexity which confronts us will not be amiss at this point.

It has for centuries been assumed that the task of Christian theology consisted in the faithful reproduction of the content of scripture.

Moral honor, therefore, would compel the theologian to declare that any departure from the teaching of the Bible is wrong. Today, however, we are in possession of a new method of investigating the Bible. The more exact scholarship which springs from this method compels us to recognize that some of the interpretations held by men of former generations are not tenable. It has been a hard struggle for many a conscientious scholar to admit that a biblical writer actually held a doctrine different from that which had been attributed to him, especially when the doctrine so attributed seems to be morally and philosophically superior to the idea which critical investigation shows to have been actually entertained by the biblical writer. The discovery of a discrepancy between ideas found in the scriptures and one's own honest convictions brings a moral paralysis so long as the traditional conception of authority is retained. On the one hand is the inherited feeling of obligation to accept as final truth whatever the Bible teaches. On the other hand is the inner imperative of honesty to one's own real beliefs. If, as is not infrequently the case, these two moral imperatives work in different directions, there can be no unified, strong theology. I think it is no exaggeration to say that most of the theologians who are engaged in the task of reconstruction today are hampered more or less by the presence of these conflicting motives. Is it possible successfully to carry out a program which in effect proclaims: "We will honestly seek the facts and will build upon the facts; but we will also conserve the traditional doctrines"? Could the astronomer say: "We will honestly seek the facts and build upon them; but we will also conserve the Ptolemaic system"? Would not such an announcement mean that the kingdom of loyalty to truth was divided against itself?

What is needed is an understanding of the moral values belonging to the older loyalty and an equally accurate understanding of the moral values inherent in the newer methods. Now the traditional ideals cannot be appreciated without a knowledge of the historical circumstances which occasioned the perfecting of the authority ideal in religious thinking. Likewise, the reasons for modifying the older ideal become evident only as we understand the changes in social life which have occasioned the rise of newer ideals of thinking. If once these two ideals can be measured against the background of history, it ought to be possible to appraise both of them truly, and consequently to allow the latent ethical value of the modern ideal to reveal itself more clearly. What is imperatively needed is a moral valuation of scientific scholarship so that we shall not feel that it somehow needs an apology. The historical method of studying religion must be pushed to its logical conclusion. We must insist that the outcome of critical scholarship shall be judged by its actual moral quality, not by the superficial test of mere conformity to a system.

In the following discussion we shall first attempt to show how the exigencies of the Christian church during the first millennium of its existence made the adoption and the perfection of the authority ideal in theology a source of moral power. We shall then show how during the past four or five centuries changes in our social and intellectual life have taken place which have gradually brought into existence a new type of moral loyalty; and that the Christian church, in so far as it retains the authority ideal, has lost its hold on large sections of modern life because of a failure to appreciate the real moral problems involved. The moral challenge due to these facts will then be stated. Finally the ethical aspects of the work of theological reconstruction will be considered in the light of the preceding survey.

SOCIAL IDEALISM AND THE CHANGING THEOLOGY

I

ECCLESIASTICAL ETHICS AND AUTHORITATIVE THEOLOGY

For centuries Christianity has been conceived to be a closed system of doctrine, guaranteed by the scriptures and the creeds which the church pronounces authoritative. The Christian is educated to feel that his primary duty is loyalty to this system, and that any departure from it is a mark either of ignorance which must be corrected or of delinquency which must be morally overcome. Nevertheless, Christian activity today is spreading into fields which have not been organized by the church. But there is at the same time a lack of clear consciousness as to the exact relation between these good enterprises which are conducted by secular agencies and the *Christian* spirit, which it is felt must be somehow identified with the church spirit. For example, many ministers have been puzzled as to the attitude which should be assumed toward such manifestly moral enterprises as "secular" educational institutions like the state universities or toward such evident agencies for human welfare as the social settlements which refuse to wear a religious label. There have not been wanting instances of deliberate hostility to all enterprises which are not formally connected with the church. The splendid moral loyalty of men who are devoted to the conception of ecclesiastical control is undoubted; but most of us are aware that there is serious moral confusion involved in the maintenance of so exclusive an attitude. In order to understand the precise nature of the problem caused by this maladjustment of the church's conscience to modern secular ideals, it is necessary to know how the ecclesiastical ideal arose, and what was its ethical significance in the days of its supremacy. Was it or was it not an expression of genuine Christian devotion? Did it or did it not accomplish a moral task? Why did it command the loyalty of men for so many centuries? Why does it arouse so much opposition today? These are questions which must be asked if we are to estimate properly the moral problem involved in the reconstruction of theology.

Nothing is easier than to point out the fact that the ideal of Jesus was opposed to and distrusted by the ecclesiastical temper of his day. It is extremely doubtful whether Jesus ever used the word "church." The New Testament writings do indeed reflect the consciousness of an organized community in his name. But a careful examination of the teachings of Jesus seems to indicate that nothing was further from his intention than to bring the moral and religious life of his followers under the control of an institution. He was too keenly sensitive to the moral disadvantages which accrued to the method of the scribes to feel any impulse to substitute for scribism a new ecclesiastical government of the life of man. His one aim was to arouse in the hearts of those who heard him the vivid conviction that all other considerations were secondary to that of being fit for membership in the Kingdom of God. The principles of right living were to be derived from God's Kingdom rather than from any earthly institution. In determining the characteristics of the Kingdom life, Jesus was astonishingly free from technical considerations. He always looked the facts straight in the face, and drew his conclusions from the exigencies of actual experience rather than from any authoritative system of morals. He thus repeatedly drew upon himself criticisms for his laxity, when judged from the point of view of the scribes. The Sermon on the Mount embodies a defence of his ideal against the accusations of those who looked upon him as a destroyer of the law and the prophets. His "better righteousness" was due to his freedom from ecclesiastical trammels in dealing with the needs of those whom he sought to help.

Those of our own day who dislike the ecclesiastical conception of religion are accustomed to point out the contrast between this free, open-minded attitude of Jesus and the rigid authoritative system which later came to prevail. It has been common, since the days of the Reformation, for us Protestants to look upon the mediæval church with its institutional control of human life as an apostasy from the original ideal of Jesus. This interpretation, however, has usually been accompanied by the presupposition that Jesus authoritatively established the Protestant system as over against the Roman Catholic system. Such an attitude toward the development of the church means a failure to appreciate the real significance of the interesting historical process by which the religion of the first disciples of Jesus was transformed into the religion of the authoritative Catholic church. It is only as we shall abandon an apologetic attitude that we shall be in a position to make clear to ourselves the actual relation between ethical issues and church discipline in the first centuries of Christianity. Some aspects of this development must now engage our attention.

I. THE CATASTROPHIC VIEW OF HISTORY

One of the most important influences in the thinking of the early church was the current belief in the speedy end of the world and the impending establishment of the Messianic Kingdom. There is not time here, even if the question could be determined with certainty, to ask how far the ideals of Jesus himself were shaped by this current eschatological expectation.[1] Certain it is that the extant records of his teachings reflect vividly that conception of history which proclaims that the supreme interests of man are to be found in another world-order. The early disciples felt that Jesus had come to enable them to prepare for a positive place in that Kingdom which was not of this world. After his death they felt themselves responsible for the perpetuation and the promulgation of the gospel of the

[1] On this point see Mathews: The Messianic Hope in the New Testament (Chicago, 1905); Sharman: The Teaching of Jesus Concerning the Future (Chicago, 1908); Muirhead: The Eschatology of Jesus (New York, 1904); E. F. Scott: The Kingdom and the Messiah (Edinburgh, 1911).

Kingdom which he had proclaimed. As differences of opinion arose concerning details of the gospel message, the group of disciples inevitably felt themselves called to protect those in their care from the wrong teachings of men who did not understand Jesus as they themselves did. In short, the primary task of the early community was to transmit faithfully to incoming members of the community the essentials of the gospel of Jesus, and to protest against any perversion of that gospel. For the gospel provided the only way by which men might become citizens of the heavenly Kingdom.

The splendid moral tone preserved by this eschatological point of view is evident to every reader of the New Testament. To judge all human conduct from the point of view of the heavenly King, whose will had been set forth in the precepts and life of Jesus, meant the most elevated conception of life which has ever ruled a generation of men. But the nobility of this ideal must not blind us to the fact that there lurked in it an element of artificiality. The ethics of the early Christian community is really the ethics of a separatist group, with almost none of the positive interest in culture which seems to us today so normal and so right. The mission of the early apostles was to enable men to be "saved" as members of the Christian community. Men might thus become entitled to a place in the Messianic Kingdom which was shortly to supplant the present cosmic and social order.

Thus there is no definite attempt to relate Christian ideals to the institutions of this world. These latter are to be endured; but it is not worth while to consider means of reforming and reconstructing them, for they will pass away in the great consummation. The warm personal interest which Jesus showed in all human enterprises was, of course, an essential element of the religious attitude of his followers; and this usually prevented the other-worldly ideal of the early church from becoming perniciously ascetic or anti-social. Nevertheless the ethics of that early Christian community was conceived as a fraternity ethics, confined in its scope to the interests of the group. These interests were, indeed, controlled by the splendid social ideals of the coming Kingdom, where righteousness was to prevail; but so far as the institutions of this world were concerned, there was no hope of eliminating their essentially evil nature. It is easy to see that this conception of the ethical task of Christianity might readily lead to an exclusive class consciousness, which would glory in certain virtues which the group had come to esteem highly because they denoted loyalty to the heavenly Kingdom, but which might at the same time be of doubtful value when measured by current social welfare. For example, martyrdom could come to assume a foremost place in the estimation of the early church because it was a conspicuous method of upholding the essentially other-worldly emphasis which was assumed to be fundamental to the gospel. Thus the fact that the ethics of Christianity began its development under the sway of the apocalyptic ideal meant that an opening was made for the habit of judging beliefs and conduct without regard to the practicability of these ideals in relation to the continuance of the institutions of this world. All this implied a wonderfully heroic ability to defy worldly influence; but it also involved difficulties if this attitude were to be carried into an age which had come to believe in the permanence of social evolution. Indeed, it was perhaps only the genuinely human sympathies aroused by discipleship to Jesus which prevented this separatist attitude from becoming even more conspicuous.

The ethical aim of primitive Christianity may be defined as the purpose to keep the group of men bearing the name of Christ pure so that at his advent Christ might approve the character of the members and admit them to full citizenship in the Kingdom which he was to establish. This meant that the disciples must take very seriously the matter of moral discipline. Ideally, the church should be composed only of those who had the mind of Christ. It was of the utmost importance that no lowering of the standards should be allowed. For if the church countenanced conduct of which Christ could not approve, the entire membership would be liable to his displeasure. Thus we find a strenuous insistence on purity of life on the part of all members of the community. We see the uncompromising severity exercised in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, for example. We must remember this aspect of the matter in order to understand how acute was the problem of Gentile divergences from those customs which Jewish Christians believed to have been ordained by God himself. If one could be a good Christian without being circumcised, where could the line be drawn? If the commands of the Old Testament could be violated in this respect, why not in others? In defending himself on this point, Paul makes it perfectly clear that he is loyal to the gospel of Christ, and that the judaizers are engaged in an attempt to "pervert the gospel of Christ."[2] All disputed questions must be decided by asking what Christ approves.

[2] See the argument in Gal. 1:6 ff.

And because Christ is in the other world, questions as to right beliefs and right practices must be determined by appeal to that other world rather than to this. To ask concerning secular expediency would be "striving to please men" rather than attempting to be a "bond servant of Christ."

There was thus laid upon the community from the first the task of determining what was involved in the attainment of a creed and an ethics which should be pleasing to Christ. Whenever any member held opinions or engaged in conduct which did not seem in accordance with the mind of Christ, some sort of discipline would be necessary. Even Paul, with all his emphasis on the doctrine of individual freedom, could not entirely avoid this necessity. When Jewish zealots were attempting to reproduce in the Galatian communities the legalism which Paul had left behind, it was easy for him to exalt the ideal of freedom. Still, even here he makes his appeal not as a free lance, but as the "bond-servant of Christ." When he was confronted with the continuance of pagan ideals in the church at Corinth, he was compelled to enter upon a detailed course of discipline. He laid it upon the conscience of the church to be active in conserving moral standards which Christ could approve. To be sure, this discipline is not ecclesiastical in the formal sense. But it has behind it the belief that it is the primary duty of Christian people to conform to a standard which is authoritatively given.

In short, the ethics of early Christianity was, in spirit, church ethics. There was no thought of engaging in political or social reform. The separatist ideal was dominant. Let this world go its way until the final judgment. Christianity is to manifest itself, not in the transformation of established institutions, but in the formation of groups of redeemed men who are citizens of the heavenly Kingdom, and whose life is dominated by the principles of that Kingdom.

From this point of view it is easy to see why certain activities which we are not accustomed to regard as of primary moral importance should seem to the early community supremely significant. Since only those who were in the church could expect to be saved in the day of judgment, the church felt its importance as the sole agency for the salvation of men. If any rival organization claimed to provide such salvation, we can realize the indignation which would fill the hearts of the faithful. Even if the rival community were actuated by what we might regard as honorable motives, such as honesty of opinion or desire for a greater purity of life, its existence would be ascribed to pride or to wanton wickedness. Anyone preaching a false or perverted gospel deserved to be anathema. Heresy and schism therefore assume tremendous importance as ethical issues. It is only as the church shall speak with a single voice that the way of life may be proclaimed without danger of misunderstanding. As Professor Thomas C. Hall has suggested, the attitude of a trade union today toward a "scab" or toward a rival organization throws valuable light upon the attitude of the early church toward dissenters and schismatics.[3] The very fact that the community was a separatist group made it inevitable that all disintegrating influences would be felt to be so dangerous as to justify the severest condemnation. Says the author of I Timothy, "If any man teach a different doctrine and consenteth not to sound words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is puffed up, knowing nothing, but doting about questionings and disputes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, wranglings of men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth, supposing that godliness is a way of gain."[4]

In the midst of differences of opinion as to what the exact content of true Christian teaching was, it would be necessary for the contending parties to appeal to the authority of Christ. The "true" church must be able to prove that

[3] History of Ethics within Organized Christianity (New York, 1910, p. 102).

[4] I Timothy vi: 3 ff.

it was following the precepts of Jesus and faithfully transmitting to men its sacred inheritance. It is impossible here to go into the story of how this demand led to the elaboration of the theory that Jesus commissioned the apostles to be the authorized exponents and interpreters of his will. It was believed that these apostles left in their writings the doctrines which they had received from Christ, and ordained their successors with power to give correct interpretation to those writings. Thus arose the canonical New Testament and the authoritative church of the bishops as the only genuine channel through which men might learn how to fit themselves for the favorable judgment of Christ.[5]

The practical necessity for such an authoritative "rule of faith and practice" is evident to any one familiar with the development of religious life in the second century of the Chris-

[5] This development has been described in detail by Harnack in his History of Dogma (London, 1896). Other excellent accounts in briefer and more popular form are in E. C. Moore's The New Testament in the Christian Church (New York, 1904), and in G. H. Ferris' The Formation of the New Testament (Philadelphia, 1907).

tian era. At that period the breakdown of the older national and local cults was evident to all. New forms of religion, or reinterpretations of older cults, came into existence, proclaiming the doctrine of individual redemption leading to eternal life. Some of the more splendid and imposing oriental cults took the name of Christianity and attempted to turn the ethical and religious energy of the Christians into channels of esoteric culture and ascetic philosophy. It was the growing power of the intellectual and mystical interpretation of Christianity known as Gnosticism which compelled the conscious organization of the Catholic Church with its claim to be the authorized guardian of the tradition which Christ had committed to his apostles, and which they had partially committed to writing and partially transmitted to their successors, the bishops of the apostolic churches. If one now wished to know the mind of Christ, there was only one sure way to find out. One must ask the apostolic church, which would tell him the meaning of the authoritative apostolic writings.

This development, it should be remembered, was due to the apocalyptic emphasis of the early centuries. It grew out of the fact that religion was not thought of as a force to transform this world, but rather as a means of making one a citizen of the heavenly Kingdom. The principles of religion, therefore, could not be discovered by a study of the "natural" history of man, but must be drawn from a supernatural order. Thus the empirical attitude toward human problems suggested by the method of Jesus was supplanted by the belief that moral principles were to be determined, not by observation and induction, but by exegesis of authoritative scriptures. This ideal has persisted through the centuries, and is still the fundamental presupposition of religious education in most churches. The advantages in being thus compelled to come into an accurate knowledge of the formulation of the Christian ideals belonging to that classical age of primitive enthusiasm is indisputable. But in an age when a moral value is being more and more attached to honest and thorough-going empirical observation, the attitude of mind which is content with taking conclusions ready-made from ancient literature comes into conflict with one of the most precious and vigorous moral convictions of the age. Every pastor and teacher constantly meets spiritual tragedies growing out of this conflict.

2. THE ECCLESIASTICAL DEFINITION OF THE CONDITIONS OF SALVATION

As has been said, the task of primitive Christianity was to fit men to become citizens of the coming Kingdom. But entrance into that Kingdom was by no means easy. The standards which Jesus proclaimed made it evident that only those who were willing to take upon themselves considerable sacrifices of worldly goods could hope for his approval. Indeed, if these standards were rigidly applied, men might well ask, "Who then can be saved?". It was, however, characteristic of the teaching of Jesus and of the community calling itself by his name that the strictness of these moral requirements was accompanied by a profound evangelical purpose to make accessible to as many as possible the blessings which God had provided for those who should accept the way of salvation provided by him.

Thus the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins was essential to the gospel message. This meant that if a man had committed wrongs which would be disapproved by Christ, he might still by repentance and change of heart find a welcome, and be assured that his former sins would not stand against him in the estimation of the judge.

But the moment this evangelical ideal of forgiveness was put into practice, it became necessary to determine precisely the conditions under which a penitent sinner might be assured of the forgiving grace of Christ. Were there any sins so serious that forgiveness was impossible? If a man who had once been forgiven returned to his former way of life, was there the possibility of an efficacious second repentance? And if so, was repentance to be granted this second time on precisely the same terms as at first? How far could the community go in the direction of leniency without the danger of so lowering the standards as to bring upon the entire church the displeasure of the Lord? In the absence of Jesus, the community must take upon itself the responsibility for determining these important issues. As a result of grappling with this problem there arose two important developments of doctrine, both of which required for their completion the recognition of ecclesiastical authority. These two developments were the doctrine of supernatural regeneration, and the doctrine of penance.

The doctrine of regeneration received its most important impulse from the apostle Paul. He had come into the Christian life through a tremendous crisis, in which he saw a direct divine interposition. He recalled the days in which he had been persecuting the disciples of Jesus, all in good conscience; he thus realized that he could not trust the dictates of his unchristianized heart. This discovery he universalized in the doctrine of the natural moral inability of every man. There is in human nature an evil power which prevents man from doing good so long as it is permitted to hold sway. The first step in moral reformation, then, is to seek divine deliverance from this power of sin.

Now exactly as Paul pictured the power of evil as a mysterious force which does its work essentially outside of consciousness, so he pictures the divine redemptive power as a mystery which lies beyond the reach of human comprehension. His own experience of conversion led him to feel that he had been seized by a heavenly power without planning or desire on his own part. He had been changed from an enemy of Jesus Christ to a devoted follower without any moral intention of making the change at all. It had come in spite of himself. Paul therefore felt that there is a divine power which can make a man good, even when the man's own moral intentions are not strong enough to lead him to forsake evil. He interpreted this mysterious power as the living presence of Christ in the soul of the believer. The consequences of this miraculous regeneration, therefore, are precisely what would occur if one's own control of his life were supplanted by the inner control of Christ. "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me."[6]

We are so accustomed to the profound religious and moral value of this Pauline doctrine of the indwelling Christ that we often lose sight of the fact that, if the mystical experience which grows out of the doctrine is not kept in the foreground, regeneration may be regarded as an essentially magical thing. For in the Pauline doctrine, moral character is bestowed upon one by the grace of God. It is essentially a miraculous donation. Any one who has not received this gift of the righteousness of God inevitably sins and falls short of the glory of God. Recent investigations have brought this Pauline conception of redemption into close relationship to the mystic doctrines of purification which had found

[6] Galatians ii:20.

expression in the various rituals of Greek and oriental mystery cults. Some interpreters of Paul believe that he, too, shared this conception of magical initiation into possession of occult divine power.[7] Be that as it may, it was not unnatural for men familiar with the ideals and rites of these mystery cults to see in baptism and in the Lord's Supper means of partaking of the divine life, so that one might think and act in perfect purity in this world and inherit immortality after death.

We should remember that this sacramental doctrine of regeneration meant that a doorway of hope was open to those who might otherwise despair of being able to enter the kingdom on the basis of actual moral desert. They might now cease to trust their own righteousness, and

[7] It is only within the past few years that this been affirmed by Protestant scholars. The most thorough-going investigation was made by Reitzenstein, in "Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen." (Leipsig and Berlin: Teubner, 1910.) Other suggestive discussions are found in Lake, "The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul" (London: Rivingtons, 1911), pp. 40-46, 210-217, 433-435, and in Percy Gardner, "The Religious Experience of St. Paul" (New York: Putnam, 1911), Chapter IV.

might rely on the righteousness of God which was freely granted to them as a gift made possible by the work of atonement wrought by Jesus Christ and made available in the sacraments of baptism and of the eucharist. No more striking testimony to the supreme ethical power of the experience of vital contact with Christ could be found than in the fact that the representatives of this sacramental ideal actually seem to us to have a truer and deeper apprehension of the spiritual power of Christianity than did those who plodded on in the more prosaic pathway of external moral discipline. Instinctively we rate the ideal of Augustine higher than that of Pelagius.

But it is characteristic of a sacramental ideal of salvation that it demands ecclesiastical control. If the sacrament is the actual bearer of divine grace it necessarily embodies a mysterious power which must be properly administered. For the amateur to attempt to make use of the sacred rites would be as foolish as for an ignoramus to come into contact with a "live wire."

Misuse of the mysteries could produce disaster. Paul suggested to the Corinthians that cases of disease and death in their community could be traced to irregularities in the observation of the Lord's Supper.[8] If through baptism we may attain a morality otherwise inaccessible to us, it is of the utmost importance that baptism be rightly performed. If administered in the name of John it did not bring with it the gift of the Spirit, and must be repeated in the name of Jesus.[9]

The sacraments of salvation, therefore, must be put into the hands of experts who were competent to administer them in proper ways and to proper persons. But this meant ecclesiastical control of the means by which men were miraculously enabled to transcend the spiritual weakness of the natural life, so as to become fit candidates for the blessings of the Kingdom. The inevitable corollary is the doctrine that there is a difference between the life of a properly bap-

[8] I Cor. xi:30.
[9] Act xix:1-6.

tised man and one who is not baptised, even if the moral activity of the unbaptised man be seemingly of quite as high a grade as that of his Christian brother. In short, mere membership in the church makes a man good. Augustine's famous verdict on the virtues of the pagans is in point here. For him these virtues were merely "splendid vices," because a pagan, no matter how admirable his life might seem, had not received the sacramental grace which alone could purge away the original corruption which is the innate possession of every child of Adam.

Thus the admirable purpose of Christianity to give to men the certainty that they could rely on a divine power to rescue them from moral inability opened the door for definitions of morality resting on ecclesiastical distinctions. These, when pushed to logical conclusions, brought confusion into the moral perceptions of men. For if what seems to men to be morally admirable is in God's sight really worthy of condemnation; and if the ground of condemnation is simply in the fact that the seemingly moral man has not been baptised, the only way in which to be sure of one's ground is to abandon personal judgments and trust to the dictates of the church, in whose hands lies the power to furnish the necessary sacramental aid to morality. So soon as this attitude of mind is assured, it becomes natural for those activities which pertain to the institutional prosperity of the church to be magnified, and moral emphasis becomes decidedly artificial. How deeply ingrained this ecclesiastical consciousness has become in our moral ideals may be seen in the exaggerated importance attached to denominational distinctions resting on differences in ritual or creed. The mythical visitor from Mars, whom it is convenient to summon whenever we wish an unconventional judgment, would doubtless be puzzled to explain why certain churches should not allow in the pulpit men whose power to speak to edification is unquestioned, but who have not been ordained in a specific way; or why certain bodies of Christians feel that Christianity would be endangered if a disciple of Christ noted for purity of life, but who had not been baptised in a particular way, were to be allowed to eat at the table of the Lord with those who were properly baptised. The themes which occupy the attention of the editors of some denominational papers are in large part survivals of the feeling that a superior moral life is attained because of ecclesiastical regularity. This attitude represents the continuation into modern times of Augustine's judgment concerning the virtues of the heathen. Sometimes this supposed moral superiority of ecclesiastical conformity begets a self-satisfaction on the part of church members which engenders a deplorable lack of sensitiveness to some moral delinquencies which seem self-evident to the secular mind. But while recognizing these defects, we shall fail to do justice to this ecclesiastical aspect of the spiritual life unless we bear in mind the fact that its evil aspects are due simply to a distortion of the evangelical affirmation that the individual who avails himself of what the gospel offers may expect his moral capacity to be enlarged through the grace of God. It is only when this ideal is disassociated from the self-evident moral duties of the social situation that it becomes morally reprehensible. The actual transformation of life which has taken place in the case of thousands of Christians because of belief in this supernatural help is perhaps the most characteristic and permanent contribution of Christianity.

Another aspect of this evangelical desire of Christianity to make available for as many as possible the resources of divine help found expression in the doctrine of penance. We Protestants are so imbued with the Lutheran polemic against the abuse of this doctrine that it is difficult for us to do justice to it. Really, it, like the sacramentalism which we have just discussed, was due to the evangelical motive. Jesus came not only to proclaim a better righteousness, but also—we may perhaps say primarily—to seek and to save those who, judged by strict standards of morality, had no right to hope for admission to the Kingdom. In later days there were always those who wished the church to stand for so rigid an interpretation of righteousness that the primary activity of the community would have been directed to the discipline and exclusion of deficient members. But these puritans were usually in the minority. Something of the mercy revealed in the life and teachings of Jesus characterized those who were most worthy to take the leadership of the church. While there were not wanting bitter controversies over this question, it became increasingly the policy of the church to provide every possible help to those who had lapsed, but who might again become true disciples. The form which this help took was the practice of suggesting ways in which genuine sorrow for sin might be expressed and the soul be disciplined into greater loyalty to the will of God. Since sin is usually due to yielding to the blandishments of this world, the evident way in which to cure the soul is by abstinence from the pleasant things of this life. Tertullian, in his treatise "On Repentance," suggests certain very practical exercises as a "discipline for man's prostration and humiliation, enjoining a demeanor calculated to move to mercy." The penitent one is to "lie in sackcloth and ashes, to cover his body in mourning, to lay low the spirit in sorrows, to exchange for severe treatment the sins which he has committed; moreover, to know no food and drink but such as is plain—not for the stomach's sake, to wit—but for the soul's." Tertullian goes on to say that the purpose of this is by a self-inflicted punishment to avert the penalty which God would rightly inflict upon the sinner. "All this may, by itself pronouncing against the sinner, stand in the place of God's indignation, and by temporal mortification (I will not say frustrate, but) expunge eternal punishment. Believe me, the less quarter you give yourself, the more will God give you." [10]

Such counsels are evidence of the earnest spirit which prevailed. It was no light thing to be restored to full membership in the com-

[10] De Pœnitentia, IX.

munity which one had disgraced by his conduct. There must be outer evidence of penitence, and definite discipline of the soul as well as inner sorrow.

But just how much of this outer discipline was necessary? Could it be left to the judgment of the individual? The necessity of standardizing the practices of penance became acute after the Decian persecution. Under the pressure of that terrible inquisition, hundreds of Christians forswore their faith either by directly offering the sacrifices required by the government, or by the scarcely less reprehensible means of bribing inspectors to give a certificate of immunity. After the persecution was over, these Christians were generally stricken with remorse, and desired to be restored to membership in the church. Differences of opinion on this matter proved to be serious, and led to many a bitter controversy. It was evident that moral confusion must prevail so long as different measures of the guilt of apostasy were in use. The Catholic Church must speak with one voice on so important a question. Thus penance was brought under ecclesiastical regulation. All this was in the interests of genuine moral discipline. It represented the evangelical purpose to make clear and definite the way in which a penitent sinner might be restored to the joy of salvation. The abuses of the system of penance should not blind us to its good qualities. If there were those who treated the entire matter on a commercial basis, and shrewdly calculated the cost of various forms of self-indulgence, there were also those who were able, by following the pathway of penitential discipline, to regain the moral poise and positiveness which they had lost.

Moreover, in the period of moral confusion resulting from the breakdown of the classic ideals and the shifting of men from one religious belief to another, the action of the church in seeking to standardize morality was of immense social importance, even if it was not undertaken on the basis of so broad a social philosophy as we should today demand. As the system of penance has been perfected, it gives to a father confessor who really believes in social ethics an admirable opportunity to influence the lives of his people in right directions. Moreover, we should not forget the breadth of scholarship which made a place in the Christian system for the cardinal virtues of the Greeks. On the whole, the fair-minded student of church history can have only admiration for the zeal and the wisdom displayed by the great leaders of the mediæval church.

So long as society remained content to follow the lead of the church in all respects, this ecclesiastical control of belief and of activity was wholesome. But there was always the tendency to forget the importance of any moral duties which did not bear the approval of the church. In particular, lack of obedience to the voice of the church was counted the supreme sin. Thus a ban was put upon any investigations or experiments which did not promise conformity to the ecclesiastical standards. Still, during the Middle Ages, the scholarship of the church was broad enough, and the aspirations of men conventionalized enough to make the control of life by the church a positive power for good. The specific reasons for this valuation of the authority ideal must now occupy our attention.

3. THE AUTHORITY IDEAL AS THE MORAL EXPRESSION OF SOCIAL NEEDS

In the year 410, Alaric, with his army of Goths having invaded as far as Rome, found the imperial power unable to prevent the capture of the city. This conquest was of profound significance. It meant the visible proof of that which is now apparent to every student of history, viz., that imperial Rome had lost its real power over men. Tradition tells us that the conqueror, in sacking the city, left untouched the treasures of the church, so great was his reverence for that institution of God. Possibly under the influence of this event, Augustine wrote his famous "City of God," in which he set forth a philosophy of history, which subordinates all human organizations to the rule of God. With the downfall of pagan institutions, the church as the visible organ of God's will assumed a new importance. Circumstances soon forced upon the church the assumption of political undertakings on an ever increasing scale. More and more as Italy was left to herself by the Eastern emperors did it become necessary for the bishops to take up responsibilities which normally would have rested on the civil government.

Now the barbarians who conquered Rome were well aware that their victory was one of brute force only. They could not forget the centuries during which that ancient civilization had held them in check and had introduced among them new ways of living. Everywhere in Europe they could see the roads which barbarian skill could never have constructed, the scientific agriculture which made possible the abandonment of nomadic habits and the growth of wealth, the architecture which was utterly beyond the reach of the rude builders of the north, the engineering which could so easily transform a wilderness into a habitation for man, and the law by which the nations of the earth could be held in check. All these signs of greatness were Rome's possession; and the conquerors knew that although they might gain a physical victory, they nevertheless did not possess the spiritual prowess which had made Rome great. Naturally, therefore, they longed to acquire for themselves the qualities which had contributed to the greatness of the ancient empire.

This meant that Europe was eager to go to school and to learn from antiquity. But the only institution either able or willing to give instruction in the secrets of ancient civilization was the church. Thus on the one hand was the eager, acquisitive spirit of the barbarian, and on the other hand the missionary spirit of the church. The times were prepared for a system of authoritative education in the principles of living. In all realms of life it was felt that the highest ideals must be sought in the past. These had already been formulated in perfect theories and doctrines. The natural progress of civilization was felt to consist in accepting these ideals from that greater antiquity, and, by trying to put them into practice, to raise the level of existing customs.

This attitude of mind is reflected in the philosophical ideals of the early Middle Ages, when the question as to whether the universal was *ante rem* or not was decided in the affirmative. Since men were not able to develop out of their own resources satisfactory generalizations for the guidance of life, since, moreover, it was evident that there existed ready-made, coming down from olden times, principles of thought and action which could be first learned and then put into practice, the habit grew of thinking of all particular ideas and all particular practices as merely single expressions of a universal rule which antedated the particular attempts to realize the truth in practice. Truth first exists in universal form. It must be "given" to the human mind, and then expressed in life and action. It was easy for men who held such presuppositions to think of the church as the divinely authorized custodian of infallible and perfect doctrines which the world must learn, and by which all men must live.

Under these circumstances, the authority ideal was the most natural and efficient means of promoting the higher life of the early middle ages. But natural as it was for that age, it resulted in an ethical attitude quite different from the open-minded freedom characteristic of Jesus and of Paul. It is easy to point out the formal difference between the closed system of ecclesiastical doctrine which came to prevail and the vital, sympathetic insight which characterizes the New Testament. But as we have seen, this later ecclesiastical system was the inevitable result of facing the facts of a decadent world under the sway of an apocalyptic view of history.

The positive achievements of the church during the middle ages may well arouse our admiration. The complete way in which Christianity was able to adapt itself to the actual situation argues the persistence even in this ecclesiastical form of that spirit of truthful recognition of the facts which is essential to any permanent triumph. The method of authority is always ethically wholesome whenever a people is not able to develop out of its own resources so successful a philosophy of life as can be derived from a study of other times or other peoples. Witness the way in which the nations of the Orient today are accepting on authority the science of the western world, learning first as ready-made theories the doctrines which they later try to put into practice, much as the mediæval leaders brought the treasures of the church to their own people for the enrichment of their life. So long as men know their own relative inability to achieve for themselves the best things of life, the attitude of docile learning from authority is natural and ethical. It is only when the institution which possesses the authority proceeds to exercise it in a way which contradicts the ideals of men that its method becomes ethically reprehensible. If our present culture should decay as did the culture of Rome, if some time in the future men should have no original power to create satisfactory ideals by which to govern life, there would probably again come an attitude of reverence for the past. The best ethics would then consist in learning and putting into practice the principles which were derived from a study of some bygone golden age. But whenever the present is vigorous enough to understand its problems and to create its ideals directly from an adequate insight into these problems, any insistence on the past merely because of its traditional sacredness is sure to discredit the moral control of the institution which thus preserves the ideal of authoritative control after it has ceased to be the natural expression of the moral consciousness.

This brief sketch of the progress of the Christian ideal will serve to make clear to us the reasons for the moral power of the conception of an authoritative theology. Christianity took shape in a decadent age, when the traditional standards of morality and religious devotion were being dissolved by the new cosmopolitanism. Moreover, among men of Jewish descent, the existence of an alien political authority with apparently invulnerable power led to a despair of any human efforts which might be directed toward the bringing in of the Kingdom of God. The obvious way of escape from despair was by trust in the power of God to overthrow the Kingdoms of this world and to establish his sole rule through the Messiah. The early Christians looked for the return of Christ to establish this Kingdom. Thus the primary ethical and religious duty was to develop a citizenship worthy of that heavenly Kingdom. Accordingly Christian ethics was detached from the social interests of this world. The necessity for maintaining in their purity the standards of that otherworldly Kingdom led to dependence on the supreme authority of the scriptures which embody the divine revelation of the will of God. The necessity for discipline and instruction in the principles of the Kingdom led to the organization of the church as the authoritative guardian of doctrine and of morals. The dissolution of the Roman empire thrust upon the church the large task of civilizing the barbarians of Europe, and led to the extension of its sphere of authority. At the same time these barbarians were morally disposed to accept the authoritative attitude of the church as one which was proper and desirable. The Middle Ages therefore established in the minds of men the conception of an authoritative divine control expressed in divinely given scriptures and interpreted by the divinely commissioned church.

During the long centuries of life under this régime it was taken for granted that this ideal of authoritative, institutional control was the perpetually right way of human progress. It was forgotten—or rather it was never realized at all—that this very system of authority had a historical origin, and that its details were empirically worked out to meet the demands of definite historical exigencies. Thus as theology was perfected, it set forth the mediæval doctrines as "infallibly" true and as "absolutely" binding on the conscience. The alleged supernatural origin of these doctrines gave to them a divine prestige which made it necessary to subordinate all merely "natural" theories to the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical system. The primary moral duty of man in Catholicism was then, and continues to be today, an absolute submission to the divine authority of the church.

But the time came when the growing intellectual powers of men reached out in new experiments; and some of these experiments met with surprising success in enlarging the borders of human knowledge and in improving the conditions of life. Little by little the moral claims of these new "natural" doctrines began to make themselves felt. The church has nevertheless held to the splendid moral imperative of submission to supernatural guidance. The magnificent ethical tone involved in this demand cannot be doubted. But when it becomes so exclusive as to enter into warfare with the moral claims laid upon the modern conscience by scientific truthfulness, it induces a moral confusion which cannot fail to be disastrous. For a time, the beginnings of the new secularism could be ignored by theology. But in our day the extent of these secular interests has become so enormous that ecclesiastical minds are becoming panic-stricken, and are adopting extraordinary measures to sweep back the rising tide of Modernism. It will help us to appreciate the gravity of the situation if we remind ourselves of some of the familiar occurrences of the past few centuries, so as to see how the despairing attitude toward this world, which gave the moral impetus to the ideal of authority, has gradually disappeared as men have found the means of making this world contribute directly to their highest welfare. We must therefore next turn our attention to the story of the discrediting of ecclesiastical ethics.

II

THE DISCREDITING OF ECCLESIASTICAL ETHICS

In the preceding brief sketch of the rise of the ecclesiastical control of moral and religious thinking, we attempted to show how natural and wholesome was the development of the conception of a world so organized as to bring all realms of human activity under the dominion of God's will as that will was interpreted by the church. During the centuries when men felt the futility of trusting to their own imperfect powers, it was a source of inestimable inspiration to be able to draw upon the resources of divine wisdom and power as these had been revealed in the scriptures and interpreted by the church. The strength of the mediæval program lay in the fact that it had correlated the Christian spirit to the actual problems of the mediæval world, and had thus produced a system self-consistent with the conscious needs of men. As we now proceed to trace some of the causes which have led to the distrust of the ecclesiastical ideal of goodness, we ought not to forget the positive service which it rendered in those centuries of difficult striving for the light when darkness encompassed social and political activities.

The discrediting of ecclesiastical ethics is due to the fact that when once the mediæval system of control had become perfected, it was identified with the unchanging will of God in such a way that the significance of new facts in the changing evolution of human history could not be recognized. Knowledge of a doctrinal system took the place of direct observation of the facts. Education consisted in the mastery of this system, and made no place for the training of leaders in the inductive study of historical processes. Thus when the conditions which had made for the success of the ecclesiastical ideal changed, the habit of loyalty to the system prevented men from recognizing that new occasions should teach new duties. As the changes became more pronounced, what was once directly contributory to the moral development of the western world became artificial and in some instances actually harmful. But of this changed moral challenge the devotee of the closed system knows nothing. Under the domination of the belief in an authoritatively revealed expression of the divine will, the Roman Catholic church, and to only a lesser extent the Protestant bodies, have witnessed tremendous alterations as the mediæval world has been transformed into the modern, without feeling any eager desire to be active in producing a future essentially different from the ecclesiastical order which had been established in creeds and policies. The authorized form of Roman theology today is the system of Thomas Aquinas, who died in 1274. Protestant thought is for the most part still formulated in terms of the Lutheran or Calvinistic systems, which were shaped before modern science and modern enterprises had made us acquainted with a world so immense that the traditional creeds are being stretched to the bursting point in the endeavor to make even a pretense of covering it. The significance of this modern crisis in the realm of theological thought will best be seen if we glance briefly at the development of the modern world so as to see how its interests found no adequate guidance from ecclesiastical Christianity.

I. THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SECULAR THEORY OF INDUSTRY

One of the greatest differences between the ancient and the modern world lies in the fact of our immensely increased ability to control the forces of nature and to make them minister to our comfort and well-being. When we think of the easy access which we have to the products of all lands, when we realize how travel, libraries and laboratories bring to us that enlargement of outlook and aspiration which we rightly value, when we think of the immense enterprises of humanitarian purpose which are being multiplied, we ought not to forget that these things are possible only because of the splendid story of industrial development which constitutes the source of pride in the experience of the business man, and which is accepted as the true measure of greatness by most popular expositors of our modern life. The ethical sense of today feels that industry, commerce and wealth may contribute an important part in the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

What, then, has been the attitude of the church toward this supremely important aspect of our modern life? Do the ethical standards of modern business embody the Christian spirit? Or have they been formulated in defiance of the ideals of the church?

When we recall the eschatological expectations of the primitive church, it is evident that there was little place for a positive valuation of industry in a world which was believed to be near its end. We may see from the epistles to the Thessalonians how the emphasis on the speedy coming of the Lord led some men to neglect their ordinary vocations. In any case, since the Christian could not carry with him into the Kingdom of God the riches which he might have amassed here, and since Jesus had declared that earthly possessions constituted a serious obstacle to discipleship, the church was naturally opposed to enterprises which aroused the cupidity of men. Of course one must labor in order to provide food for himself and those dependent on him. But beyond the indisputable necessities of life, any acquirement of wealth was to be condemned. There was a strong tendency in the early centuries of the church to regard private property as contrary to both natural law and to the express will of God. To reserve for oneself the comforts and luxuries of life was not only dangerous to one's spiritual welfare; it was also taken to mean a deliberate defrauding of less fortunate men of their rightful share in the blessings of God. Said St. Ambrose: "Thou, then, who hast received the gift of God, thinkest thou that thou committest no injustice by keeping to thyself alone what would be the means of life to many?—It is the bread of the hungry that thou keepest, it is the clothing of the naked that thou lockest up; the money that thou buriest is the redemption of the wretched."[1]

The interest which the church took in industrial life, therefore, was dominated by the desire to prevent Christians from succumbing to the lust for gain, and the purpose to prevent men from defrauding one another of the rightful goods of life. There was almost no appreciation of the positive place which industry as such might play in the promotion of human welfare. Business was looked upon as a dangerous employment for the Christian, because it was so certain to beget the sin of avarice. Indeed, the most rigid teachers of the church were quite willing to see all gainful occupation abolished. A pungent quotation will show the uncompro-

[1] Quoted by W. J. Ashley, English Economic History, I, p. 127.

mising point of view which was sometimes urged:

"Is trade adapted for a servant of God? But, covetousness apart, what is the motive for acquiring? When the motive for acquiring ceases, there will be no necessity for trading. . . Do you hesitate about arts and trades, and about professions likewise for the sake of children and parents? Even there (in the gospels) was it demonstrated to us that both dear relations and handicrafts and trades are to be left behind for the Lord's sake; while James and John, called by the Lord, do leave quite behind both father and ship; while Matthew is roused up from the toll-booth; while even burying a father was too tardy a business for faith. None of those whom the Lord chose to him said, 'I have no means to live.' Faith fears no famine."[2]

Thus, in principle, the devotion of one's time to gainful industry was discouraged by the church. If one wished to be a consistent follower of Christ, he was expected to forswear wealth. The reforming movements in Catholicism have usually looked upon the vow of poverty as essential to any thorough-going espousal of Christian principles.

In the case of those who were not ready to

[2] Tertullian, De Idol., 11 and 12.

take the vow of poverty, the church attempted to exercise control over the way in which trade was carried on. The principle of the golden rule was embodied in the prohibition against lending money for interest and in the economic doctrine of a "fair price" as the ideal to guide any one in a business transaction with others. There was here, as in the case of the more rigid judgment as to the superior virtue of poverty, no thought of estimating the social value of trade. The individuals engaged in business were to be saved from the danger of losing their souls through indulgence in the sin of covetousness. Thus the doctrine of a "fair price" was interpreted in an individualistic fashion which seems strange to us. Regard must always be had to the rank of the person engaged in the transaction. It was believed that every man was ordained by God to a certain rank or class in society. Kings and princes, of course, were expected to live in greater grandeur than common people. A nobleman would naturally need a larger income than one of common blood. The exhortations of the church were based on this assumption of divinely appointed differences of rank. One must so regulate his business as to receive from it only so much as was required to provide the necessities of his rank. Anything more than this would be due to avarice.[3]

During the early middle ages, this personal and religious view of industrial relationships worked on the whole for the welfare of society. During the disintegration of political life due to the supplanting of the older order by the feudal system, these ideals tended to prevent those who had the power to do so from exploiting the poor without scruple. When there were few opportunities for the investment of money in safe ways, the temptation to hoard it or to use it for selfish gratification was great. To lend to a friend or neighbor in need without demanding interest on the capital was an act of

[3] Thomas Aquinas, for example, defines the sin of avarice as follows: Avaritia peccatum est, quo quis *supra debitum modum* cupit acquirere vel retinere divitias. He argues that a man may rightly seek external goods "prout sunt necessariæ ad vitam ejus *secundum suam conditionem.* Summa Theol., II, 2: Quæst. cxviii, Art. I.

Christian love and involved no serious loss to the lender. To insist on a "fair price" was practicable so long as goods were produced in the locality where they were exchanged, so that it was easy to know approximately the cost of the materials and the time necessary to produce them.

But the time came when the mediæval world had so far mastered the processes of agriculture that localities began to produce a surplus which might be exchanged for goods produced elsewhere. Little by little men became aware of the enrichment of life which might come from this new trade. Thus arose the stimulus to specialization in manufacture, so as to have more goods to exchange for something else. Now money could be profitably invested in enterprises which were of social value. The ecclesiastical estimate of capital was inadequate under the new conditions. Lending for interest became more and more common in spite of the efforts of the church to prevent it. Indeed, in the attempt to save the form of the prohibition the church was led to countenance certain palpable evasions of the letter of the law which destroyed its moral influence. Thus men were led gradually to assume an attitude toward industry and trade which took its start from the actual social needs of the day rather than from the traditional doctrines of the church. The entire structure of our modern industry is built on the fundamental assumption that it is right and wholesome for those who have capital to lend it to corporations for the purpose of developing business enterprises. Today no Christian so much as asks concerning the legitimacy of interest-bearing investments, or is usually aware that the church ever objected to them.

The fact that the church was not able to give any positive valuation to the growing industrial interests of the modern world made it inevitable that those interests should look elsewhere for the principles which should guide them. At first the guilds, and later the national governments, undertook the task of organizing trade and industry. That characteristically industrial institution, the modern city, owes its existence to the exigencies of industry and trade. It is evident to us all today that these immense centers of human life have grown practically without reference to the ideals which Christianity represents. The modern city is built purely and simply to foster business enterprise, and, as we are becoming painfully aware, is responsible for some of the most formidable problems which confront the church of the immediate future.

We cannot here enter into the history of the development of industry and trade on a purely secular basis. We may only point to the classical expression of this new secularism in Adam Smith's economic theories, which developed into what is known as the laissez-faire philosophy. The principles of business today are largely shaped by this famous doctrine of non-restraint. Adam Smith held that the best results will be attained by allowing the most free competition, unhampered by either ecclesiastical or political control. Out of this unrestrained striving of men with one another will come economic justice and general welfare.[4]

The immediate results of the adoption of this purely secular doctrine of industry have been such as to give us reason to pause and reflect. The sorry story of the exploitation of child labor and of the resulting depleted wages, not to speak of the moral disintegration due to the elimination of men from their customary places as wage-earners for the family, is already well known and almost universally condemned. Indeed, it may be said that the world has already rejected this individualistic theory of labor and is seeking for some restraints which shall make for greater justice. But the significant thing about the industrial ferment of our day is its entire ignoring of established Christianity

[4] "All systems—either of preference or restraint—being taken away, the obvious and simple system of natural liberty establishes itself of its own accord. Every man, as long as he does not violate the laws of justice, is left perfectly free to pursue his own interest in his own way, and to bring both his industry and his capital into competition with those of any other man. "The Wealth of Nations," Book IV, Chapter 9.

as a factor in the reconstruction. It is felt that the ecclesiastical consciousness is too remote from the actual wrongs which men are suffering to render valuable aid in the crisis. Out of the turmoil of the industrial conflict is arising an immanent democratic social movement, which is creating new valuations, and is seeking to inaugurate new economic policies. Indeed, in the extraordinary awakening of the social conscience which is today in progress, the church has been quite generally taken by surprise. The religious possibilities latent in modern social movements are seldom appreciated by men educated in the traditional way. Clinging as they have been to the mediæval conception of ethics, they have not imagined the possibility of a revival of religion which did not come in the conventional ecclesiastical fashion. Yet the essentially moral character of many movements of industrial reform is easily evident, and there are not wanting signs of a dawning consciousness that in the spirit of Jesus is a dynamic which is indispensable to the full success of the movements for social reconstruction.

Indeed, it would not be difficult to show certain parallels between the modern situation and the ideal of mediæval control. Is not the demand for a "living wage" today similar in ethical import to the mediæval doctrine of a "fair price"? Are not movements to protect the poor from loan sharks dominated by the same Christian spirit which forbade the loaning of money for interest? There is a distinct recognition of the moral bankruptcy of the purely secular conception of business enterprise. But the regeneration of industry cannot come by the application of formal ecclesiastical standards. If Christianity can suggest no other remedy, the world will turn, for weal or for woe, to secularism.

2. THE SECULARIZATION OF POLITICS

The second realm where we may trace the progressive elimination of ecclesiastical control is in the field of politics. The Catholic Church, to this day, holds to the right of the ecclesiastical power to control the state, so as to compel the retention of Christian principles. Indeed, Protestantism, in its revolt from the ecclesiastical power of Rome, did not conceive the possibility of a purely secular state. In the endeavors to establish the rights of national princes over against the pope, it was always taken for granted that the state should be "Christian" in character. We need only recall the committal of the religion of a German state to the decision of the ruler to see how completely religion and politics were believed to be interrelated. Calvin attempted on a small scale in Geneva exactly what Hildebrand had attempted on a world-wide scale. Even in the beginnings of our own country's history the Puritans sought to establish an exclusive theocracy, in which political rights should be restricted to those who were true orthodox Christians, embodying the precepts of the Bible in all their thinking and action. The Oxford Movement in England in the middle of the last century was provoked partly by the conviction of earnest Christians that a secular basis of suffrage by which Catholics, Dissenters, Jews and even atheists might be admitted to a share in the conduct of government meant the end of righteousness. To this day the majority of men in the western world continue to think in terms of a state church.

But as political interests developed, it became more and more evident that ecclesiastical control was incompatible with the welfare of modern nations. This was strikingly illustrated in the attempts which Grotius made early in the seventeenth century to eliminate the horrors of war. The immediate result of the Protestant movement had been to arouse hostilities which appealed to religious motives, and which because of this religious appeal assumed especially terrible form. We need only recall the terrors of the Thirty Years' War in Germany, or the military measures of Spain in the Netherlands to realize that differences of religious faith provoked conflicts of the most dreadful sort, where factions of the same race might be pitted against each other in a contest in which conscience lent peculiar tenacity to the efforts of the contestants. Grotius, that great apostle of humanitarian philosophy, saw that international peace could not be promoted by appeal to the ecclesiastical conscience, for here lay the main reason for warfare. He therefore laid the foundations of modern international polity by an appeal to the dictates of "natural law." It is true that Grotius referred the principles of this natural law to God, who was believed to have implanted certain ethical principles in human nature; but the significant thing was that this God-given knowledge was accessible to all men without the mediation of the church. Indeed, so certain was Grotius of this secular appeal, that he declared that natural law would constitute a valid basis for ethics even if God did not exist at all.

As a result of such an appeal, there arises a conception of the state very different from that held by the ecclesiastical conscience. Instead of deriving its authority from God through the church, it rests upon the sanction of the natural desires of the citizens. The theory of a "social contract" arises. It is held that the proper way in which to constitute a government is for men mutually to agree concerning the modes of corporate activity which will best promote the rights of all to the pursuit of life, liberty and happiness. If any existing government is found to be disregarding these fundamental rights of men, it can be justly criticised. Even ecclesiastical traditions must give way before this fundamental recognition of the natural rights of men.

It is, of course, evident that this secular philosophy of government has not yet completely won the field. The transition from mediævalism to modernism was made through the doctrines of the Independents, who attempted to substitute for an ecclesiastical state a genuine democracy in which the Bible should rule the thoughts and actions of citizens, and thus indirectly constitute a divine basis for government. But the moment democracy is in fact introduced, it becomes necessary to grant freedom of interpretation of scripture; and this is likely to lead to controversies of such warmth that religion again seems to fail to produce political peace. It has thus proved actually more practicable to found modern democracies on a purely secular basis, so that there can be no pretence of compulsion on the authority of a nonhuman power. This ideal has been expressed in the constitution of our own country, which distinctly excludes the exercise of formal ecclesiastical control over politics. Other nations of the modern world are following in our footsteps, and the time seems not far distant when the countries of Europe will either renounce formal connection between church and state, or will so distinctly guarantee to different religious bodies their full rights that the state becomes in fact, if not in name, neutral toward any particular ecclesiastical polity, and thus is practically secularized.

The functions of the modern state, therefore, are really defined in terms of the social and economic welfare of the citizens, and not in the interests of any ecclesiastical ideal. This is true of Catholic countries as well as of Protestant, however the Catholic church may attempt to conceal the fact. Modern Italy is a conspicuous example of the triumph of the secular theory of government under the very shadow of the Vatican with its futile claim of temporal authority. Every modern state has found itself compelled to cease to be the organ of any ecclesiastical polity. It must grant equal toleration to all forms of religious belief and practice. This is equivalent to a confession that, so far as the policy of the state is concerned, Christianity is no longer the sole rightful religion. But if this position be once granted, the mediæval basis of politics is overthrown, no matter how constantly members of the church may talk about "Christian" nations. Our own national constitution, which does not mention the name of God, but which derives its sanctions from the fact that "we, the people," have decided to adopt this and no other form of government, is typical of the modern situation.

Out of this new sense of secular freedom arises a typical form of political ethics. So long as the state was conceived as deriving its authority from a higher source, the government was naturally left in the hands of an aristocracy, who were presumably fitted both by nature and by education for the task of wisely administering the affairs of the state. As is well known, in the inception of our own national existence, there was a widespread distrust of a thorough-going democracy. Our constitution was devised to keep the election of national senators and of the President out of the hands of the people generally, committing the selection of these officials to a more aristocratic body. Thus the ethics of politics, like the ethics of the mediæval church, was essentially aristocratic.

But democracy has progressively claimed an increasing share in our government, until today it is almost an axiom that final authority rests in the voice of the people themselves. Moreover, the direction of democratic progress is easily discerned in the growing demand for certain fundamental reconstructions of society which will involve the modification or even the abolition of some of the time-honored "rights" of property and of position. The political questions which must be faced in the near future grow out of our modern social and industrial development in so direct a fashion that there arises a sense of impatience and even a spirit of revolution whenever the older methods of aristocratic control are attempted. Men are insisting that they know what they want and what they ought to do because of the fact that they are living in the midst of the problem, and are able to discern certain immanent principles of justice. So alien to this modern moral belief is the conception of church control that modern movements are steadily but surely pushing the church as an institution out of the circle of political forces. Changes in the observance of the Sabbath, in the privileges of the clergy, in the legal status of the church, and in the place of religious education in public instruction, are common enough to show the strength of the new secularism. Its ethical power should be better understood than is usually the case.

3. THE CHANGED POSITION OF THE CHURCH IN A SECULAR STATE

In connection with the secularization of politics, it is important to notice certain inevitable consequences in our attitude toward the church itself. The mediæval church was regarded as a supernatural institution, existing by virtue of its divine establishment. Individuals were utterly dependent upon the church for the sacramental grace which took them out of the secular world and constituted them members of the heavenly group which was to enjoy and to exhibit the favor of God.

But when the church becomes disestablished, it is in the eyes of the law an association of men who have voluntarily agreed to unite in order to promote the objects of religion. Legally, therefore, the church has a human origin. It can formulate its own articles of in-corporation, like any other legal society. It can determine its own ritual, creed and practices. So far as the civil authorities are concerned, there is no one exclusively right form of church polity, no one divinely authorized form of belief, no one definite list of sacraments. Exactly what shall be the nature of a given ecclesiastical organization rests with the constituent members.

Now this legal theory concerning the nature of the church inevitably reacts upon the conception of the church as a religious institution. If the members of the church formally declare its purpose, its creed, its practices, do they not as a matter of fact determine its theology and its ethics? They may indeed declare that the theology and the ethics must be drawn from an alleged divine source; but the fact that it is legally optional whether they assign this origin to their theology inevitably evokes a consciousness of human participation in the formulation of the standards by which church members are to be guided. Thus there is induced a changed type of religious consciousness. It becomes possible for men to deliberate and to decide for themselves matters which in the mediæval church were decided by divine authority. But the moment such deliberation is allowed, it involves a complete transformation of the ethical standards by which religious problems are decided. Mere authority can no longer rule supreme. The rights of conscience are recognized, even to the extent of defying ecclesiastical authority.

Look, for example, at the modern estimate of the significance of excommunication. In former centuries the most terrible fate which could befall the individual was exclusion from the church. Today, since the church consists of a voluntarily associated body of believers, any one has the privilege of withdrawing from its membership without thereby discrediting himself in the eyes of his fellow men. This really means that, in so far as one's life as a citizen is concerned, one's morality can be complete without reference to specifically ecclesiastical demands. From this point of view, the older distinction between the unregenerate and the regenerate either vanishes or is practically disregarded. The church is valued by its members as an institution for promoting certain traits of character and belief; but it is no longer believed that all the virtues are within the church and that the seeming good deeds of those without its pale are only "splendid vices."

One of the most significant aspects of the modern conscience is to be found in the popular attitude today toward attempts on the part of the churches to discipline members of the clergy for heresy. From the mediæval point of view this was a most natural and praiseworthy function. But in our day, so convinced have we become of the moral privilege of men to formulate their own beliefs that it seems like an attempt to infringe personal rights when a church undertakes to dictate to an honest-minded man what conclusions he shall reach in his theological thinking. If, however, the church shall renounce its claims to be the proper arbiter of the religious thoughts of men, just what is left of the authority ideal? The extent to which this actual abdication of ecclesiastical control has gone is scarcely realized among us. The moral pronunciamentos of the modern church are really simply the expression of the social sense of the collective membership, formulated in ecclesiastical gatherings. Less and less is there any thorough-going attempt to regard them as disciplinary laws. Dissent by individuals from such general resolutions as are passed is not uncommon, and, when expressed, carries with it little or no moral obloquy. So completely is the right of private judgment recognized in modern Protestant bodies. Thus there has come to prevail in our actual practice an ideal which is utterly incompatible with that sort of ecclesiastical control which found expression in the traditional theology. The ethics of belief today involves an appeal to standards strikingly different from those which were embodied in the systems of theology which prevailed in the days of ecclesiastical supremacy.

4. THE SECULARIZATION OF MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

During the middle ages the preservation and promotion of scholarship were entirely in the hands of the church. Only the clergy had either the leisure or the ability to master the traditions of antiquity. As we have already seen, the social needs of the mediæval period demanded the mastery of the principles of learning which had been formulated in the classic age. The technique for the discovery of new truth had not been developed. Consequently scholars naturally became advocates of a predetermined system, which was to be imparted to the coming generation in order to keep alive the light of learning. Since the only material for education was derived from the theology of the church fathers and from the fragments of the classics which had escaped destruction, the task of scholarship consisted in mastering these treasures of wisdom so as to transmit to coming generations the culture contained in them. Moreover, even the pagan culture which remained had been so worked over by theological scholars that it fitted into the ecclesiastical system in such a way that reason and revelation seemed admirably to corroborate each other.[5]

The fundamentally theological interest reflected in the ideals of the time led to the valuation of scholarship solely because of the aid which it could give to men in their primary task of preparing for heaven. Said St. Ambrose: "To discuss the nature and position of the earth does not help us in our hope of the life to come. It is enough to know that scripture states that 'He hung up the earth upon nothing' (Job 26:7). Why then argue whether He hung it up in air or upon the water, and raise a controversy as to how the thin air could sustain the earth; or why, if upon the waters, the earth does not go crashing down to the bottom?"[6] Now if the inquiries of those of curious mind led not

[5] For an admirable account of this attitude of mind, see Taylor: The Mediæval Mind, New York, Macmillan, 1911.

[6] Hexæmeron, I, Chapter 6.

simply to useless themes, so far as the salvation of one's soul was concerned, but went so far as to inspire doubt or hesitation concerning some of the revealed doctrines on which our salvation depends, such secular inquiry was, of course, regarded as sin. The story of the agonies endured by honest souls who were thus led into doubt would fill volumes. It is still a very real spiritual tragedy in the case of hundreds of men today.

The consequence of this attitude on the part of the church was to give a supreme moral value to conformity. We have already had occasion to notice the way in which the exigencies of ecclesiastical discipline led to the doctrine that heresy or schism was a deadly sin, because the author of wrong teaching was defeating the eternal salvation of precious souls. The moral hatred of distinctly theological errors was easily transferred to all intellectual movements which did not profess to serve the interests which the church held dear. It is difficult for us in this age of toleration to realize the intensity of this moral indignation unless we turn to the pages of some patristic or mediæval treatise, and observe the awful anathemas and the blood-curdling epithets applied to the erring one.

The control of the church over intellectual ideas was more complete than it was over industry or politics, because all learning was necessarily in the hands of the church; manuscripts were usually copied by monks and put into circulation through the priests; churchmen were for a long time the only persons who were supposed to concern themselves with learning. The result was that by the end of the middle ages scholarship was completely under the domination of the ecclesiastical standards of right thinking, and was so organized as to exclude any ideas prejudicial to the church.

Consequently, when the stirrings of modern scientific endeavor began to make themselves felt, there was no scholarly preparation for the appreciation of the real moral significance of this new and fruitful method of ascertaining the truth. The story of the conflict which science has had to wage with the ecclesiastical temperament is well known, and need not be rehearsed here.[7] We now recall with a sense of shame the fact that the church did its best to suppress the new astronomy and the new cosmology made possible by the discoveries of Copernicus and his successors; and that it is in many places still waging a bitter warfare against the doctrine of evolution, which has proved to be so fruitful a means of investigation in our modern world. Especially intense has been the opposition to the application of scientific methods in the study of church history or to the Bible. There are still living in our country men who were deposed from their chairs as teachers because they felt it to be their duty to teach what they had learned from a more thorough study of the facts rather than to conform to the traditional doctrines.

The development of modern science, then, has

[7] It was set forth in striking form by Andrew Dickson White in his "History of the Warfare Between Science and Theology." (New York, 1897.)

been accompanied by a prolonged and bitter contest against the ecclesiastical conception of the ethics of scholarship. When dissent from the opinions approved by the church is defined as sin, there is sure to be serious confusion in the realm of religious education.

But in our day, the victory has been practically won for the newer type of scholarship. We are coming to adopt the scientific rather than the ecclesiastical ideal for the guidance of life. Modern colleges and universities frankly advocate the spirit of unbiased and free investigation. Indeed, we are even beginning to talk about scientific investigation as the necessary preliminary to any real church efficiency. But there is one unfortunate result of the struggle of the past four or five centuries which is a source of regret to all lovers of truth. That is the inheritance by scientific literature of a hostility to theology, engendered by the opposition of the church to investigations which are now recognized to be of positive value to humanity. It is, perhaps, a matter of surprise that this hostility to the church is not more pronounced than it actually is. When we recall the way in which honest-minded men have been made to suffer for their honesty, when we remember that many of the blessings which we now enjoy were gained only after the determined opposition of the church was overcome, it is easily comprehensible that the victors in the battle should speak of their defeated opponents in terms of hatred and contempt. The restraint of most scientific literature in this respect is morally commendable. None the less, in the modern college and university there is often present an undertone of patronizing contempt for the ideas of the church, which easily runs into a similar attitude toward the religion which the church propagates. Frequently a teacher or writer indulges frankly in adverse criticism of the ideas which in the case of most men are indissolubly connected with Christian faith. Even where there is no expressed disapproval of the church's attitude, the mere history of a science may serve to bring out the fact that in certain realms the doctrine of the church has been hopelessly discredited.

Thus there is rapidly coming into dominance among us a type of mind which sees more moral heroism in opposition to the church than in conforming to its ideas; which looks for the truth in ways which the church has formally disapproved; and which is keenly conscious that the ecclesiastical ideal has been discredited by those who are the real leaders of the world's thought. It cannot be said that the canons of morality have been carefully worked out from the new point of view. But there exists a genuine enthusiasm for freedom of thought; and this enthusiasm is not always too critical of the scientific correctness of the position of the man who attacks the church. Let any one propound a theory today in such a form that it is clearly seen to contradict the traditional theological doctrines, and the author of the theory immediately becomes a newspaper hero, a modern David defying the ecclesiastical Goliath. Such cheap and superficial judgments augur ill for the moral seriousness of the anti-ecclesiastical spirit.

Every one at all acquainted with the facts knows that the leaders in the church today are actually welcoming the scientific spirit to a far greater degree than would appear from a reading of the unrevised creeds and disciplines which survive from former days. There is good reason to believe that the church does not deserve so severe a reproof for her spirit as is currently assumed by advocates of the ideal of freedom of investigation. Still, it ought to be recognized that the moral demand for untrammelled inquiry is uncompromisingly opposed to any program which prescribes beforehand the limits within which conclusions may be formed. The scientific spirit is so completely given over to the ideal of letting future investigations determine the future ideas of men, that it feels an irksome restraint even in the suggestion that one ought to pledge himself to hold fast doctrines which have been regarded as absolutely essential to Christianity. It is a far cry from the days when the mediæval church was in proud control of all the activities of life to the present calm assumption that Christianity must, without claiming or asking any superior authority, enter into competition with other ideals in the struggle which will ultimately determine the fittest to survive. Morally it makes all the difference in the world. Mediæval Christianity was a privileged institution. It could appeal to divine authority for its rights. The modern church must meet the competition involved in a democratic opportunity for all rivals with equal opportunities. Obviously, when the rules of the game are defined as they are in our modern world of democratic scholarship, any appeal to authority is regarded as a confession of weakness rather than of strength. Thus the very thing which constituted the moral power of Christianity in former centuries is today discredited. The ethics of scholarship is opposed to the ethics of ecclesiasticism; and the modern world is more and more coming to the side of scholarship. That a serious crisis is thus created is evident.

5. THE RISE OF A SECULAR ETHICS

We have seen how business, politics and scholarship have become completely emancipated from ecclesiastic control. Each has developed ideals of its own, which are actually constituting the basis of social activity in the modern world. It was characteristic of the earlier development of these secular movements that great enthusiasm and optimism were engendered. It was felt that when the power of the church was once broken, the exercise of freedom in thought and in action would soon so adjust matters that friction would be removed and the spirit of man be emancipated to enter upon unlimited progress. The eighteenth century was especially marked by this youthful optimism. In the place of the older religion of authority, the Deists proposed a universal religion of reason, which all men would voluntarily adopt, just because it was reasonable. In the place of the older control of industry, the Manchester school of economists predicted the abolition of tyranny and oppression by the simple and apparently reasonable plan of unrestricted freedom of contract. In the realm of scholarship and education, the elimination of religious control was believed to open the way for a broader and finer culture.

It must be confessed that the earlier optimism has not been entirely justified. As the new ideals have developed without adequate organization around a central religious ideal, they have often come into conflict. The result is a very general confusion in the minds of men who are discovering that the fragmentary customs and aims of the various walks of life do not always fit into a unified whole. "Business is business," says the man of affairs, when he is reproached for pressing his industrial advantage to the injury of others. The ethics of modern industry, admirable as they are in certain respects, are nevertheless at many points sorely in conflict with the moral demands of humanitarian interests. "Politics is not a Sunday School affair," declares the man who is confronted with the opportunity of securing certain desirable political ends by means which cannot be made public. Democracy brings its temptations as surely as any other form of government. "The standards of scholarship must be maintained," says the schoolmaster, when he is urged to alter the curriculum so as to fit boys and girls more adequately for the life before them. Everywhere are the signs of maladjustment as the different realms of human activity have been experimenting without adequate guidance from any great central interpretation of the meaning of life.

Out of this process of experimentation has grown a new conception of the task of ethics. Until recently, even the alleged secular systems were not really different in principle from the ecclesiastical theories which they were seeking to supplant. In the place of the canonical scripture or the authoritative church they simply set the authority of certain a priori principles of reason. Specific duties were ascertained by a process of deduction from these principles. But we are seeing today the rise of a new method of valuing human action. This newer method abandons appeal to a priori principles, and seeks instead to gain an adequate understanding of the rise of ethical needs in the evolution of the race, and to discover by an accurate analysis of that evolution the sort of conduct which furthers the normal and wholesome progress of social and individual life. Ethical precepts thus are made relative to human needs instead of being referred to any superhuman or pre-human source.

The consequence of this historical and empirical approach to the subject is the elimination of the last vestige of the mediæval attitude. It was fundamental to that attitude to think of the principles of morality as having been revealed and promulgated in permanent form. Consequently a true ethics was believed to be universally valid for all ages and races and conditions of mankind. Any divergence from this eternal code would be considered as positively wrong. From this point of view, it was natural to assume that the ecclesiastical system represented the unchanging truth. But the adoption of the historical method of studying morality means that all ideals, including the ecclesiastical system, are seen to be historically conditioned. Of none can we say that it is "absolutely" good in any timeless sense. Of all we may truthfully say that they arose under the pressure of definite interests in connection with specific circumstances. Ethics, therefore, becomes a science of relative values rather than an exposition of "absolute" truths. Of course, there are certain abiding human traits and needs, as there are certain abiding conditions of human life; and these will continue to require certain fundamental moral principles. But the validity of such principles is referred to the needs of humanity in its present relations to the world and to society rather than to superhuman sanctions.

It is true that this view of ethics is not yet universally apprehended. Probably popular thinking, and to some extent professional writing on the subject, will for some time to come be dominated by the older conception of eternally valid a priori principles. But the fruitful work of those who in recent years have been employing the empirical and historical method, and who are slowly but surely revealing the intimate relations between moral precepts and concrete human needs set in certain definite economic and social situations, is beginning to make itself felt in all realms of the spiritual life. Little by little men, even in the churches, are accustoming themselves to the notion that a more accurate understanding of the duties of the day can be ascertained by an empirical study of the facts than by the exegesis of any ancient literature. So important does this first-hand study of social life seem to many of the leaders of modern enterprises, that institutions which are addressing themselves to our most pressing modern social problems are likely to feel considerable impatience with the ecclesiastical conscience, which can so easily reason from a priori principles to conclusions which often fail to relate themselves practically to the definite problems in hand. Our settlements, our charity organizations, our civic welfare movements and other enterprises of undoubted moral significance are employing the methods of the empirical investigator rather than the methods of the churchman. It seems likely that this spirit of inductive study of the conditions of human conduct and welfare will more and more dominate the progress of morals; and the church, in so far as it preserves the mediæval attitude, will find itself discredited by modern organizations with an ethical purpose.

6. THE HISTORICAL EXPLANATION OF RELIGION

Finally, attention should be called to the fact that even the study of religion itself, which is naturally a realm in which the church should feel itself secure, is being secularized. Theological scholarship in Protestant seminaries is rapidly committing itself without reserve to the scientific method, which means the ideal of searching for the truth without pledging oneself beforehand to uphold the doctrines approved by the church. Those who are engaged in the tasks of theological scholarship today are keenly aware of the crisis through which we have been passing in recent years. It is only within the past two decades that Old Testament scholars have felt generally free to give to the facts of Hebrew history an interpretation radically different from that which the church had held. Even to-day the espousal of critical scholarship is apt to involve the theologian in the necessity of apologising for his work whenever he encounters the ecclesiastical type of conscience. In the New Testament, the break with tradition involves a new attitude toward certain doctrines which have been regarded as central in Christian faith, and it will be some time before complete freedom will be acknowledged there. But the significant aspect of the situation is the steady progress of the scientific and critical method as over against the method of authoritative exegesis. Even when critical scholarship affirms traditional doctrines, the *method* by which the conclusions are reached involves as complete an emancipation from ecclesiastical control as would be embodied in conclusions which diverged from those approved by the church. The modern theological scholar holds the convictions which he does, not because they are dictated to him by divine authority, but because, after using the best means of inquiry available, these conclusions seem to be justified.

It is true that this outcome is not clearly seen by all those who profess to employ the critical method. The results of the historical method of study yield such fruitful insights into the nature of religion and ethics that, in estimating the gains, we are often led to overlook the fact that these same gains are accompanied by the loss of the older principle of authority. Little by little, however, it will become clear to all that in so far as theological scholarship actually follows critical methods it has abandoned the possibility of following the voice of ecclesiastical dictation. It refuses to allow the church to have the final word as to the meaning of religion. It insists on the historical relativity of biblical doctrines, thereby contradicting the theory that these doctrines have a super-historical origin.

It is progressively recognizing that Christianity did not come into existence and grow up in quarantine from all pagan influences; but that, on the contrary, it felt and responded to the same historical exigencies which contributed to the making of pagan religions. Little by little it is coming to be seen that there is not so wide a gulf between the religion of the Bible and the kindred religions of biblical times as was presupposed in the traditional interpretation of scripture; and that there is not so absolute a difference as has been commonly assumed between the way in which the men of the Bible arrived at their convictions and the way in which men in later times achieved their faith. In short, a secular rather than an ecclesiastical explanation of the origin of Christianity is coming to be a commonplace in theological literature. This, it scarcely needs to be said, does not mean the denial of the greatness of Christianity; but it does mean an explanation of that greatness which is strikingly different from the interpretation which the church has given.

Moreover, the application of the scientific spirit to the study of the non-Christian religions of today is leading to a new valuation of these. They, like Christianity, are seen to be historically conditioned, and to have received the form which characterizes them because of the exigencies which they had to meet. Traits which would be decidedly immoral for men educated in western traditions may be of quite different import for the oriental. We cannot judge by any absolute standard. Indeed, we are coming to see that the oriental may have developed certain virtues which the different round of western influences has failed to evoke. At any rate, it is no longer respectable among scholars to seek to show the utter depravity of pagan nations as a step in the process of proving the perfection of Christianity. Every religion must receive a historical explanation.

Thus the new spirit has entered into the very citadel of our religious thinking. We are rapidly becoming accustomed to the idea of forming our opinions concerning Christianity without feeling bound to accept the guidance of the church. We have secularized the methods by which we apprehend Christianity itself. The consequences of this new scholarship will be profound and far-reaching when they are allowed freely to operate. The Roman Catholic church, with its sensitiveness to all that threatens the supremacy of ecclesiastical standards, has entered upon a war of extermination. Protestantism is divided into two camps over this very question, but in the absence of an adequate ecclesiastical organization is unable to preserve the temper of mind which is essential to a vigorous warfare against modernism. Steadily in the schools of theology the scientific spirit is growing, and ministers are learning to discharge their duties with an ever-increasing confidence in the empirical as opposed to the authority method.

Thus the question becomes acute whether the introduction of the newer methods is accompanied by a clear apprehension of the ethical aspects of their use. If the sense of moral obligation to the church be eliminated, is the change accompanied by a new moral enthusiasm? Or does it mean a privileged laxity on the part of scholars? The challenge involved in this transition from the mediæval to the modern type of thinking is one that should engage our serious attention. To this challenge we must now turn, in order to feel the force of the moral issue in present-day religious thinking.

III

THE MORAL CHALLENGE OF THE MODERN WORLD

In the survey of Christian history which we have made, we have seen how the moral exigencies of the early centuries of our era made necessary the development of a system of authoritative control of ideals in order to preserve the standards of the higher life and to educate the barbarians into a condition of political and social self-sufficiency. But the very success of the church in organizing the life of the Middle Ages under the direction of her institutional and doctrinal control brought into Christian consciousness the conception of a closed and final system of morals and religion. So fixed did this belief in the infallibility of the established system become that it has cost a hard and long struggle to transcend it. Consequently, as we have already seen, when the new movements which have produced what we know as the modern world began to make themselves felt, the church was unable to make a place for them within her system. These interests, therefore, proceeded to organize themselves without consulting the larger spiritual ideals which might have been supplied by the church. Thus there has come into existence our modern society, with its secularized business, its secularized politics, it secularized education, its secularized science, and its increasing disregard for the somewhat uncertain attempts of the church to grapple with the situation.

We thus stand today more nearly in the position of the Christians of the first three centuries than has, perhaps, ever been the case since those early days. We can no longer speak of a "Christian" civilization, however we may be tempted to do so. Some of the greatest achievements of which our age boasts are due to secular enterprise which has won its right to freedom only after a bitter warfare with the ecclesiastical conscience. This conflict, as we have already noted, has left a hostility toward theology which in subtle or in unconcealed ways finds expression in the text-books and treatises which students and intelligent citizens read for information. The culture of our day, more generally than we like to admit, assumes a half-pitying, half-contemptuous attitude toward the traditional forms and efforts of Christianity. The church thus finds itself, as did the church of the early days, surrounded by a culture which is really not in sympathy with its aims. Editors of newspapers know that they can count upon plenty of delighted readers who enjoy the discomfiture of the church or of the theologians.

If Christianity is to dominate this new situation, the first duty is to look the facts squarely in the face, in order to determine precisely the nature of the task before it. The moral challenge of the modern world must be considered, in order that the duty of a moral theology may be made plain. One of the heartening symptoms of our day is the large amount of attention which is being paid to this phase of philosophical, ethical and religious reconstruction.[1] There is danger that if the church does not awake to the seriousness of the situation she may seem to be expending all her energies in simply keeping alive. The great desideratum of today is an aggressive program for Christianity which shall command the moral enthusiasm of men.

I. THE CHALLENGE DUE TO THE CONCEPTION OF EVOLUTION AS THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF HISTORY

If our situation is like that of the early Christians in one respect, viz., in so far as we are surrounded, as they were, by a culture which is either indifferent or hostile to Christian ideals—in another way it is strikingly different. They expected the great catastrophe from heaven at any time, which would speedily bring to an end the kingdoms of this world and leave Christ

[1] While the discussion in these pages was being written, President King published his book with the suggestive title, "The Moral and Religious Challenge of Our Times." (New York, Macmillan, 1912.)

supreme in the Messianic kingdom. It was possible, therefore, for them to devote themselves entirely to the prerequisites of that other-worldly kingdom. No provision need be made for future generations on this earth. In spite of the fact that the mediæval church undertook the organization of society her ideals were dominated by this primitive eschatology. The church was to rule the world, indeed, but it was not for the purpose of making this world the ultimate scene of her triumph. Her glory was to be found in the number of redeemed souls in heaven. The miracles which were wrought through her were believed to be more significant than were social achievements in the realm of industry or politics.

Protestantism also preserved this fundamental other-worldly emphasis. The miracle was, indeed, transferred from the external sacraments to the inner workings of the Spirit in the life of the individual; but the emphasis was none the less laid on rescue from this world and preparation for heaven. To be able to testify to redemption from sin through the miraculous provisions of the plan of atonement was regarded as the supreme test of Christian life. It is true that Protestantism, especially under the influence of Luther, did assume a direct ethical interest in non-ecclesiastical enterprises; yet the motive underlying good works was essentially the eschatological one of the primitive church. To hear the approving voice of God at the final judgment rather than to rejoice in the possibility of better moral conditions on this earth has been the supreme motive for right living proclaimed by the church.

If one wishes to realize what a difference there is between this traditional evangelical emphasis and the modern social ideal, it would be interesting to try the experiment of first reading some modern discussion of a moral program which gains its power from the vision of a better social order which we may help bring into existence, and then to turn to a hymn book for poetic inspiration. One realizes thus, with something of a shock, how largely our Christian devotion has been stimulated by visions of the heavenly Jerusalem, the glories of which we may enjoy only after death has removed us from this earth. "I'm but a stranger here; heaven is my home." "This consecrated cross I'll bear till death shall set me free; and then go home a crown to wear; for there's a crown for me." "A charge to keep I have, a God to glorify, a never-dying soul to save, and fit it for the sky." "My soul, be on thy guard; ten thousand foes arise; the hosts of sin are pressing hard, to draw thee from the skies."—Such are the hymns on which our spiritual aspirations have been fed. The constantly repeated emphasis on the sky as the truest source of religious experience is significant. So accustomed are we to this point of view that we see nothing ludicrous in the sight of a procession of innocent children marching and singing, "Jerusalem, my happy home, would God I were in thee; would God my woes were at an end, Thy joys that I might see." Such expressions of religious fervor assume that the present world is in a hopeless state. Like the Pilgrim in Bunyan's famous allegory, we are to leave it behind and seek the celestial city.

But for the past four centuries a totally different conception of our world has been domesticating itself in our thought; and when we are not under the domination of the eschatological inheritance from the church, we instinctively act on the supposition that the newer scientific view is the correct one. We become spectators of an age-long cosmic history, the immensity of which fairly bewilders us, while it gives to us tremendous inspiration. Our world is not hopelessly decadent, doomed to utter destruction in the course of a few days or years. It is vigorous with the splendid strength of youth. Back of us stretch the uncounted ages during which star dust was gathered together and organized into the marvelous symphony of form and motion. Little by little our planet was prepared for the life which began its wonderful course of evolution. Today we see man just emerging from helpless infancy into a real consciousness of his power; and before the human race stretch millions and millions of years in which progress may be made.

The consequences of this new view of the place of man in the universe are only beginning to be apprehended. The effect of the eschatological conception was to limit the aspirations of men to the immediate generation in which they lived. Today we are seeing new ideals of duty arise as a consequence of the recognition of the enormous future of humanity. We are beginning to set a valuation upon the natural resources of this earth and to make far-reaching plans so that future generations may not be bankrupt because of our short-sighted policies. When we see how in the past precious resources have been wasted or have not been used to advantage, just because of the narrow outlook belonging to a smaller world view, we begin to appreciate what a tremendous difference it is going to make when men actually come to think of this earth as the place where their descendants for countless generations are to live, rather than as a transient locality doomed to speedy destruction. As President King has remarked: "Think, for example, of President Roosevelt's plan for conserving the resources of the entire earth. One may be pardoned for doubting whether there was a man of the last generation with imagination enough even to set the problem."[2]

It is immediately evident that the presence of such a far-sighted planning for an indefinite future constitutes a challenge to a Christian ideal which limits its plans to cover simply the eternal welfare of those who are now alive. The spirit of our age is no longer contented with a policy which formulates itself in terms of rescue work. Preventive measures are more and more coming to the front. The traditional "mission" in the poverty-stricken portion of a great city seems to the modern social worker to be blind to some of the obvious undertakings which demand active aggressive labor. Can we be

[2] The Moral and Religious Challenge of Our Times, p. 103.

content to "save" a few souls in this generation, if the children of these same "souls" are to be overwhelmed by the same physical and social forces which occasioned the downfall of their parents? Noble as is the service which Christian charity renders to those who are in want, can we be content with the perpetuation of economic conditions which make such charity the inevitable, but undeserved, lot of thousands? The immensely lengthened perspective which has been introduced by the doctrine of evolution has brought into discredit a type of religious ethics which is satisfied with the mere regeneration of individuals here and now, without also definitely planning to make less necessary such rescue for the coming generations.

It will help toward a reconstruction of our attitude in this matter, if we remember that the eschatological hope, which is now being abandoned in our modern thought, had a distinctly social and political origin. The better future of Israel was pictured as a kingdom on this earth full of joy and blessedness and righteousness.

It was only when the hopelessness of any agitation for political reform so long as the nation remained under foreign rulership was realized, that the appeal of faith was made to the miracle of the heavenly Jerusalem. With a better understanding of the Old Testament comes the inspiration which leads naturally to a new appreciation of the Israelitish hope for a nation of righteousness where future generations on this earth may enjoy the blessings of God's righteous dominion.

Indeed, as the church has been pursuing with vigor her task of evangelization, she has come to realize more and more the importance of this larger outlook. Today the missionary enterprise is being shifted from a program of rescuing a few souls from eternal disaster to the ideal of a long campaign of education and social reconstruction in the non-Christian nations. A significant change may be observed in the motives to which those soliciting men and money for missions appeal. Increasing emphasis is being laid on the claims of the social and political future of the non-Christian peoples on this earth. With gratifying infrequency do we hear echoes of the argument once so much in vogue, which harrowed men's feelings by appalling arithmetical calculations concerning the numbers of heathen who were being eternally lost every moment. In general, it may be said that where the church is taking her duty most seriously she is most sensitive to the demands which grow out of the long look ahead.

But when all has been said, it remains evident that the current theological and ethical treatises too often embody a sense of perplexity due to the two different world views. There is on the one hand the inherited feeling that the interests of this world are somehow "secular," and are therefore to be excluded from a program which is concerned to fit men for heaven. On the other hand, there is the recognition that these same worldly interests are actually too absorbing to be ignored. The consequence is a paralysis of moral vigor in dealing with some of the great social problems. For example, an adequate understanding of the biological, social and moral facts of human life brings clearly before us the imperative need for wholesome recreation in order to prevent city dwellers from succumbing to the pessimism engendered by modern conditions of toil and of home life. But the ethical traditions of our churches and the preaching of evangelists portray amusement as a distinctly worldly thing, unworthy the attention of a consistent Christian. As a result, the church is evidently embarrassed in dealing with this problem of primary importance for the welfare of the young. This hesitancy on the part of those whose business it is to conserve spiritual ideals has allowed the means of amusement to be provided in the main by those who have no high ethical motives, but who recognize a tremendous opportunity for financial gain in exploiting humanity in its inevitable search for relaxation. There are not wanting men shrewd enough to see that, if once the standards of the church can be transgressed in matters of slight importance, the moral sense of boys and girls will be so confused that it becomes possible to introduce the attractions of actual viciousness without any adequate perception of the difference between wholesome fun and harmful excitement on the part of those who have been trained to consider all pleasure sinful. The moral disintegration which is being wrought in our youth by the actual habitual indulgence in forms of amusement which are technically adjudged sinful by the traditional ecclesiastical conscience is a serious menace. Only the abandonment on the part of the church of the ascetic attitude which naturally accompanies the other-worldly conception of the religious life, and the frank recognition of the positive value of the natural instincts and aspirations belonging to the so-called "secular" life, can put Christianity in a position to deal vigorously with some of the primary moral problems of our day.

Important as is the task of rescuing individuals from the evils of their environment, it is equally imperative to assume responsibility for the environment itself which exercises so potent an influence in the shaping of character. Such a conception of the moral task of humanity is overwhelming in its scope and its intricacy. It challenges Christianity to an undertaking which, if it be once recognized, will absorb all the enthusiasm and all the activity which can be inspired by the Christian spirit for countless generations. In a day when the imagination is stirred by the possibilities of creating a new earth in which prosperity and righteousness shall prevail, a Christianity which doctrinally proclaims this world to be a "city of destruction" from which to flee to the "celestial city" will find its influence steadily lessening.

2. THE CHALLENGE INVOLVED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENTIFIC CONTROL OF THE CONDITIONS OF LIFE

A natural concomitant of the eschatological point of view which entered into historical Christianity was the appeal to miracle as the supreme means of salvation. So long as the destinies of life were pictured in another world, while this earth was believed to be doomed to destruction, it would naturally be futile to depend on secular resources for the ends to be attained by religion. Even more important was the fact that the ancient world knew little of the methods of scientific control. The attention of philosophers was directed to the consideration of metaphysical problems or to the analysis of the inner life of the soul. The exact methods of experiment and of verification which are essential to the perfection of scientific control were not employed sufficiently to make their value evident. Moreover, during the dark ages, even the science which had been worked out in the classical period was largely lost.

The psychological effect of this lack of scientific control is reflected in the religious beliefs and practices of unscientific peoples. If one does not know exactly the cause of disaster, the attempt to remove or to avert it naturally takes the form of appeal to occult and mysterious powers. Fetichism, magic, mysterious incantations, elaborate rituals, sacrifices and the like are employed in the hope of inducing some unseen power to intervene to the advantage of the individual engaging in the prescribed practices. Where there is ignorance of scientific principles, the exigencies of life lead to bizarre and erratic attempts to secure the goods which men desire. In so far as morality is connected with religion, it shares this erratic character. Moral values are attached to conformity to superstitious customs.

In the case of Christianity, the splendid moral traditions of Israel and of the New Testament prevented the close alliance of morality with the superstitions which characterize many religions. But the eschatological emphasis combined with ignorance of scientific technique tended to make Christianity unappreciative of scientific endeavor when it actually began to make itself felt as a means of control. Indeed, the pessimistic view of human achievements which was inwrought into theology in the doctrine of the natural inability of human nature served to make religious people suspicious of the self-confidence which led men to announce methods of action which did not minister to that absolute dependence on divine grace which was esteemed as the highest mark of a religious faith. Any efforts to ameliorate the condition of human life which did not flow from the experience of divine grace were regarded as schemes for diverting attention from the supreme duty of seeking divine aid. The evils of this life were believed to have been ordained of God for some mysterious purpose of discipline. They could be endured because of the certainty that in the next world all would be made plain; and those who had borne sorrow and pain in a proper attitude of religious submission might trust that somehow it all worked out to their spiritual welfare. The self-denial of the monastic ideal helped to induce the notion that the sinful desire for pleasure was being rebuked by God in his providence when he compelled those who were inclined to be worldly to remember that the joys of self-indulgence were really transient and unsatisfying.

It is evident that when this view of the ministry of suffering is held, when one's theodicy depends on being able to show that God is preventing us from becoming too fond of this world by the providential plan of ensuring pain and disappointment to all merely earthly appetites, any attempt to relieve human suffering by secular means would be judged as an attempt to frustrate the providential discipline which God had provided. To alleviate the sufferings of childbirth by the use of anæsthetics was for a time vigorously denounced as a sacrilegious scheme to remove the providentially appointed consequences of Eve's share in the primal sin of mankind. If relief from suffering were provided in such a way as to bear testimony to the manifest intervention of God, well and good. Miraculous healings through saints and relics might furnish this evidence, and to this day are encouraged by those who share the mediæval ideals of religion. But mere secular experimentation with remedies seemed to be inspired by a diabolical curiosity.

Thus so far as the physical and social aspects of life were concerned, the belief that this world was destined to speedy destruction made it seem futile to plan for improvements which might at any moment be swept away. The broad outlook which makes it seem to us worth while to begin experiments because, through scientific publications and mutual criticism, men may cooperate in furthering human knowledge, and future generations may build on the foundations which the past has laid, was not present in connection with the mediæval valuation of this world. To believe that God had appointed the evils of life for purposes of good, which might be partially discerned; to try to trace a connection, real or imagined, between misfortune and sin, so that the sufferings of the individual could be interpreted as a "judgment" of God on evil-doing; to exercise a submissive faith amid sorrows—these were the virtues which naturally accompanied the older consciousness of man's helplessness in the presence of adversities.

I was recently impressed by this point of view as I had occasion to look over some old family letters, dating from the first third of the last century. They were written by intensely religious people whose intelligence was quite above the ordinary. But even the best intelligence of that age was keenly conscious of the many foes to human welfare which could not be overcome by any means known to man. The miseries and privations of life occupied a prominent place in the thinking of two generations ago. There was an eager desire to find some rational explanation for the many untoward events which entered into experience; but there was no thought that human science could do much to relieve the situation. The issue must be left in the hands of the Lord. The moral duty of the Christian was to submit rather than to protest. A high death rate was regarded as an inevitable provision of an all-wise Providence, and was to be accepted as one of the unchangeable facts of life.

How utterly different is our attitude today! The presence of evil arouses our protest. No longer do we submit in pious resignation when tuberculosis reaps its dreadful harvest. We are conscious that we have a means of scientific control, and our plain duty is to make that control effective. When cancer claims as its victim some loved member of our circle, we pray that God may hasten the day when the researches of medical experts shall have put into our hands the means of eliminating this terrible foe. If we have money, we perhaps endow an institution for medical research. Within a generation a revolution of striking significance has been wrought in our attitude toward disease. The older equipment of pious philosophy and humble submission is antiquated, or is resorted to only in cases where there is no prospect of scientific control in sight.

One of the most suggestive illustrations of this changed attitude was to be seen in the program adopted by the churches in New Orleans at the time of the last epidemic of yellow fever in that place. It had then recently been demonstrated that this disease was due to the bite of a certain species of mosquito. The problem was to keep the mosquitoes away from those who were sick, and to destroy as rapidly as possible these carriers of infection. Churches were for the time being transformed into instruction stations, giving information in order that all citizens might cooperate with the scientific efforts of the board of health. Sermons were devoted to this practical task. People were taught that God had put into their hands the means of combatting the unseen sources of pestilence. Religious fervor was turned into channels of scientific activity, and such commonplace enterprises as screening water barrels and windows took on a new significance. As a result of this new type of Christian activity, the epidemic was stamped out before the advent of frost.

The revolutionary consequences of this new attitude are easily apparent. Formerly the religious consciousness would have tried to explain the presence of the pestilence as an act of God. Now it is seen to be due to a lack of certain sanitary precautions. Formerly men would pray for an early autumn with its beneficent frosts; but they could only wait passively for the fulfillment of their hopes. Now prayer is directed toward the establishment of personal devotion to the cause of sanitary prevention, and issues in active service. Formerly the constant presence of deaths would serve to remind all men to prepare for the judgment. Now thoughts are directed to the problem of preventing death by destroying the cause of the disease. When once a successful means of scientific control of evil is known, the older attitude of passive submission becomes intolerable. The plain duty of the hour is to stir men to make use of the means of salvation which God has provided by natural means. To distract attention from this duty by exhortations based on a prescientific religious philosophy would be rightly condemned.

Now the religious consciousness trained in the older fashion does not easily discover in this manipulation of "secular" and "materialistic" resources the spiritual significance which it ought to possess. The means of grace have been conceived essentially as miraculous provisions for our eternal welfare. But the processes of scientific control are not miraculous. Consequently they are not evaluated in exactly the same way as the traditional religious aids. There is a real danger that the influence of this traditional emphasis shall lead men to overlook the possibility of a religious inspiration which may reveal in the new gospel of sanitary and social science genuinely Christian motives, and lead to an immense enlargement of the realm of religion. That there is here a distinct challenge to our generation cannot be denied. For the benefits of the modern campaign of scientific sanitation are so evidently greater than those of a non-scientific religious philosophy, that mankind will eventually espouse the former. If no religious interpretation is given to the scientific ideal, it will come to constitute a formidable rival to the church; but if the latent religious significance of scientifically directed effort be clearly brought out by Christianity, the territory of Christian aspiration and activity will be so expanded as to create boundless enthusiasm. Which of these alternatives shall come to prevail depends largely on the attitude of Christian theology toward the scientific ideal.

What has been said concerning sanitary and medical enterprises is equally true of social science. We are coming to realize, as our fathers did not, that the spiritual life of men is conditioned by such materialistic items as the housing which they can secure, the number of hours which they sleep, the character of the tasks at which they must work, the presence or absence of means of recreation, the amount and quality of their food, the nature of the contract between employer and employed, and countless other situations which need investigation by social experts. We are discovering that the ideal which once seemed to open a royal road for every boy and girl to attain a college education through the preliminary ministrations of the public high school is, under modern conditions, actually inducing a formality and an artificiality into education which constitute a serious menace to the moral earnestness of our youth. To adjust the public schools to the actual needs of our day is a moral task of supreme importance. To secure legislation, so that the burden of industrial accidents shall not fall like a blight on those who are least able to bear them, is an undertaking which is arousing as genuine religious enthusiasm as is the foreign missionary enterprise among the churches. To secure an equitable system of taxation and a morally defensible plan for the just distribution of wealth are problems which cannot be evaded if we are to preserve our moral self-respect.

Now these social problems are to be solved by the application of scientific control to the conditions of life. Moral cooperation of men in these enterprises is possible only as the moral significance of scientific method is made plain. The traditional ethics of the church, however, embodies the ideals of a prescientific age, in which the dominant motives are the prominence of other-worldly considerations and the expectation that relief may be secured by miracle. Both of these elements of ecclesiastical belief are flatly in contradiction to the principles of scientific control. The moral sense of the modern intelligent Christian is therefore likely to be distracted between the unscientific presuppositions of the theology which he learns in the churches and the stirring call of modern life to engage in scientific warfare against the foes of social welfare.

Indeed, the larger social implications of modern industrial disturbances are not likely to be observed by one whose training has been limited to the round of ecclesiastical duties. Said an excellent and conscientious clergyman to me once when there was in progress a strike in the Chicago stockyards, in which a singularly unselfish ideal of social solidarity was being proclaimed by the strikers, "How much better it would be if the working people there would just quietly accept the little reduction of ten cents a day in their wages rather than arouse such unchristian feelings and stimulate such unchristian actions." He could not see that in this strike the strong were attempting to bear the burden of the weak, and to enable the poorest paid workers to enjoy a fairer share of the profits of the industry. He was unaware that the issue of ten cents a day was as full of moral significance for the strikers as was the matter of a duty on tea to our rebellious forefathers in Boston. He would not have counselled quiet submission to that tea tax in order to avoid unchristian feelings and actions. But in the case of this modern instance of economic maladjustment, his ethical training was insufficient to enable him to sympathize with the real motives of the strikers. They were thinking, not of saving individual souls for another world, but of saving standards of living here and now. They were engaged in the attempt to make possible for themselves and for their fellow workers some of the personal virtues which were economically impossible under existing circumstances.

This new moral enthusiasm for the human attempt to devise an efficient way in which the circumstances of life may be so controlled as to make possible higher standards is likely to engender impatience with the non-resisting type of conscience represented by the above-mentioned clergyman. Professor James, in his little volume on Pragmatism, cites an extreme example of this impatience in a violent attack on religion uttered by Morrison I. Swift. After relating the circumstances of several distressing instances of tragedy because workingmen could not cope with the social and industrial hindrances to wholesome living for themselves and their families, Swift comments on a peculiarly dreadful incident as follows:

"This Cleveland workingman, killing his children and himself, is one of the elemental stupendous facts of the modern world, and of this universe. It cannot be glozed over or minimized away by all the treatises on God, and Love, and Being, helplessly existing in their monumental vacuity. This is one of the simple irreducible elements of this world's life after millions of years of opportunity and twenty centuries of Christ. It is in the mental world what atoms or sub-atoms are in the physical—primary, indestructible. And what it blazons to man is the imposture of all philosophy which does not see in such events the consummate factor of all conscious experience. These facts invincibly prove religion a nullity. Man will not give religion two thousand centuries or twenty centuries more to try itself and waste human life. Its time is up; its probation is ended; its own record ends it. Mankind has not æons and eternities to spare for trying out discredited systems." [3]

However exaggerated the menace in such an arraignment may be, it cannot be overlooked. Is it not true that for twenty centuries Christian faith has inculcated so exclusive a dependence on divine favor, and has been so completely interested in the fate of man in the other world that it has failed to give due religious value to the part which man may take in the improvement of conditions of life in this world? Is it prepared to appreciate the program of men who cease to pray for miracles, and who rather pray for the patience and the courage and the wisdom to learn how the evils of this world may be attacked and overcome by weapons forged by human hands? One who has caught a vision of humanity engaged in the cooperative task of

[3] Human Submission, Part II, p. 190 ff., quoted in James' Pragmatism, p. 31.

eradicating evils by the adoption of the best aid which science can afford feels toward the pious program of the traditional ethics very much as a man would feel if he had left his house in charge of some good saint who, when a fire broke out, fell on her knees and prayed to God for rescue instead of turning in the fire alarm. When the house is on fire, morality demands something not mentioned in the prayer books. When society is threatened with disintegration, the situation demands measures not outlined in the evangelistic "plan of salvation."

The importance of this modern ideal of scientific control is beginning to make itself felt in many plans for religious education. It is a hopeful symptom that so many churches are undertaking the task of an adequate education of church members in the scientific aspects of the moral problems with which Christian men in our age are concerned. But the traditional distrust of human ability, and the inherited feeling that what comes by the pathway of miracle is for that reason more valuable than that which comes by processes which can be mastered and controlled by man, tend to prevent a full recognition of the religious and moral values inherent in the employment of "secular" means for the establishment of the Kingdom. If Christianity is not to be left behind in the development of this distinctively modern type of moral aspiration, it must learn to feel a genuine moral enthusiasm for scientific research and achievement. If the fruits of a purely secular administration of forces for social amelioration shall be greater than the fruits of ecclesiastical effort, the words of Jesus himself would justify the secular program. The extent and the strength of the challenge coming from this modern ideal of scientific control are, I fear, greatly underestimated by our Christian consciousness.

3. THE CHALLENGE DUE TO THE NEW VALUATION OF THE PHYSICAL CONDITIONS OF SPIRITUAL LIFE

It is only in modern times that Christianity has begun to appreciate the intimate connection between physical conditions and spiritual health. The note of asceticism which accompanied the other-worldly ideal of salvation often led men to feel that the emaciated hermit was in a better position to achieve righteousness than was one who indulged in the comforts of the flesh. Moreover, the conception of a "soul" existing independently of bodily relations had been inherited from the Greek psychology, and colored all interpretations of the spiritual life.

Now if the welfare of the soul depends on getting free from the entanglements of the flesh, it is evident that no positive moral value will be placed on the physical aspects of human experience. The products of secular industry must not be used to promote luxury. Indeed, as a German scholar has suggested,[4] the severe standards of ascetic piety inculcated by Calvinism led men to feel that wealth could not be righteously used merely to promote physical

[4] Max Weber: Die protestantische Ethik und der "Geist" des Kapitalismus. Archiv für Socialwissenschaft und Socialpolitik, Vols. 20 and 21.

comfort. Consequently the savings accumulated by thrift were naturally invested in industry; and capitalism was indirectly furthered by the ascetic ideals of Christianity.

Nowhere is modern science bringing greater innovations than in the discovery of intimate relations between physical and spiritual health. The moral care of school children demands the supervision of their physical condition. Poor eyesight may be accountable for apparent indifference and rebellion. The wearing of glasses may be more efficacious in improving the morals of a child than all the ethical exhortation in the world. The presence of adenoids in the breathing passages may occasion traits which would formerly have been attributed to evil character. Social workers are discovering that mal-nutrition causes many instances of delinquency, that housing conditions are responsible for the lapse into sin of many a boy and girl, that the lack of playgrounds for children in crowded sections of our cities puts those of tender years into the school of crime which carries on its sessions in the streets. In olden times, parents used to expect that great good would come if children attended protracted meetings night after night, that their "souls" might be saved. Would intelligent Christian parents today countenance any such loss of quiet sleep as is involved in such a program? More and more keenly are we coming to realize that it is futile to attempt any culture of the soul which does not take account of bodily conditions.[5]

Modern secular ethics from the days of Hobbes has been insisting on this very thing. To be sure the earlier attempts to formulate a secular theory of life were marked by crude psychology. But in selecting happiness as the criterion by which to judge a thing good or bad, the appeal was made to the physical apparatus by which sensation is generated. The individualism which marked the utilitarian ethics prevented a complete appreciation of the point of

[5] This aspect of the spiritual life has been admirably expounded by President King in his "Rational Living." (New York, 1905.)

view involved. But the doctrine of evolution has led us to see how the physical organization has come to be what it is through a process of growth involving at every stage a relation between the inner life and its environment. Thus the physical universe has been laid under tribute for countless æons in the production of the vehicle of human life. The proper use of our inherited powers must involve an appreciation of this biological basis of our ideals and achievements.

Now so long as the problem of creating a good life was conceived in terms of a "soul" which could by the exercise of will and by the miracle of divine grace be transformed into an independent center of righteous activity, without regard to physical or social surroundings, the task of Christianity was comparatively simple. To bring the soul face to face with certain doctrines of salvation, and to urge the spiritual self-surrender which would secure the grace of God, constituted the main duty of those who felt responsible for the welfare of others.

It is still the underlying philosophy of great public revivals which bring people together regardless of their physical and social environment, and preach a gospel largely dissociated from any specific physical conditions of life.

If, however, we realize the intimate connection between the soul and the body, we shall not be content with the "purely spiritual" efforts which Christianity has made in the past. Exactly as the schools have been compelled to employ medical examination of children and to introduce regular inspection of buildings and occupants in order to secure the best mental life of the pupils, so the church cannot hope to help any man adequately unless to the spiritual appeal is coupled the purpose to make environment contribute helpfully and not disastrously. The importance of environment is recognized by the Catholic church when it insists on removing the members of monasteries and convents from the "world." It is informally recognized by every wise pastor, who is compelled to deal with the evil-producing elements in the community where his people live. But the inherited conception of salvation as an escape from the "flesh" and the "world" has meant a failure to include an adequate estimate of the importance of these in the formation of character. There is rapidly spreading in our day a philosophy which is in part a revolt from this one-sided emphasis. A widely accepted popular movement is organized frankly on the theory that morality is only the natural consequence of economic conditions. The gospel of this modern economic-social religion proclaims that entire attention shall be given to physical problems. Improve the economic status of men, it is declared, and you will automatically eliminate the ills and the sins of men. There is just enough truth in such a philosophy to give it a plausible standing.

When we have recognized that physical elements enter positively into the making of spiritual life, we have greatly enlarged the realm of ethical and religious endeavor. The "purely spiritual" conversion of a soul without regard to bodily conditions may be accomplished without much expenditure of money. But a plentiful food supply makes financial demands. Correction of physical defects may require surgical operations which are expensive. Oculists and throat specialists and experts in nervous disorders cannot be provided without money. To give to every person in a great city proper housing and recreation and education and sanitation would cost enormously. In short, the financial resources of our day, staggering as they are when counted up, are none too great for the problems before us which a modern religion must solve if it is to be true to its mission.

This means a new attitude toward the acquirement of wealth. Instead of regarding it as a snare to the soul, the modern spirit regards it as the indispensable means of securing the highest life. We cannot have too much wealth for our welfare, provided it is used with a Christian spirit. Saint Francis, with his vow of poverty, is a wholesome rebuke to self-indulgence, it is true; and such rebukes will always be needed. But the modern mind would prefer to do homage to a Jane Addams directing the expenditure of a few billion dollars with which to reconstruct our slums and to provide medical ministry and recreational opportunities for the children who now are aged before their youth is over.

Even more than the benevolent expenditure of money is essential. The disposal of wealth cannot be detached from the way in which it is accumulated. To defraud men and women of their rightful opportunities to achieve for themselves the things needful for a wholesome life, and then to attempt to supply these needs by some form of charity or benevolence, is a distinctly immoral proceeding. The traditional ethical precepts of Christianity have had to do mainly with the charitable and patronizing uses of money. To become rich was a suspicious matter anyway; and the rich man was urged to satisfy his conscience by conferring unearned benefits upon the unfortunate. The classic precepts of Christianity were formulated purely from the point of view of the individual who was tempted by the possession of wealth to indulge in the sin of avarice. The objective aspects of the industrial life as a normal and necessary expression of moral activity were not adequately apprehended. If a man had oppressed others in the acquiring of his property, the church provided a way in which the individual might make his peace with God; but it did not feel called upon to do more than to warn against the dangers to the individual soul in the pursuit of riches.

We are today seeing the dawn of a new conception of the significance of the industrial enterprises of mankind. No longer do we exclude from the list of positively valuable undertakings the manifold forms of business so essential to our welfare. Our modern ideals are too intimately bound up with the success of these undertakings to allow us to take consistently the mediæval attitude, unless we were to have the courage to return to the mediæval economic status. Increasingly we are seeing that a man's activities are the most important means of developing his moral attitude. If, in the process of producing the material goods which we need, those who contribute to the production of any commodity are compelled to labor under conditions which blight the soul, and leave the moral and spiritual impulses deadened, the modern spirit calls loudly for reform. If to the blighting influence of the work itself there is added the sense of injustice on the part of those who are employed in the industry, we have a situation full of moral menace.

It is a matter of common observation that it is quite possible for a business layman whose vision has not been enlarged by the social point of view to be a devoted church member, and conscientiously endeavor to follow the precepts of Jesus without developing that moral sensitiveness to the social problem which is imperative. For Jesus lived in a world where there were no such industrial enterprises as those which cause us such serious concern. The working people to whom he addressed himself were not factory employees; nor were the capitalists of his day confronted with the complexity of our modern commercial world. The "master and servant" relation was taken for granted as the normal and right basis of employment. Paul even sent a runaway slave back to his master. The employer who reads his New Testament in a literalistic way will inevitably define his Christian duty in terms of the class spirit which underlay the industrial system in the time of Jesus. His righteousness will be likely to express itself in benevolent schemes of welfare work and charity which he plans and as a patron administers for the benefit of his employees, without engaging their moral cooperation at all. Meanwhile, fundamental questions like the rights of laboring men to organize for their interests, or the moral supervision of the conditions under which men are asked to labor—just because such questions lie outside of the more primitive realm of industrial conditions reflected in the Bible—may not be brought definitely to the conscience of the Christian manufacturer by any distinctly religious reading or reflection. Perhaps nowhere is the influence of traditionalism more harmful than here. To hark back to times of primitive industry for our models of social duty in an age of steam and of highly organized business can bring only calamity.

The challenge of the modern world in this realm is reflected in the industrial unrest which finds expression among the toilers and which leads them increasingly to put their trust in purely secular means for improving their situation. It is clear to all who intelligently observe the course of events that the coming generation is going to insist on radical changes in the ethics of industry. The era of *laissez-faire* is over in the minds of all except those who are hopelessly ignorant of the plain facts of recent history. The great question of the future is as to how the new ethics shall be put into practice. The tremendous agitation now going on in the direction of an appeal to external and non-religious reconstructive efforts is ominous. Does it mean that mankind has become so convinced of the impotence of inner spiritual forces that it is willing to trust its case to external reorganization? Are legislative changes the only means to be employed to bring in the new era? Are men to acquiesce in a program which encourages individuals to be passive under the benevolence of government as they have formerly been passive under the aristocratic patronage of the rich? Or is there to be developed an inner spirit of moral heroism which shall make of legislation only the expression of great ethical convictions in the hearts of men? And if this inner spirit of independent heroism is developed, shall the churches have a prominent part in the religious renaissance? Or is it to be the flowering of a religion born purely out of the immediate demands of modern life, and losing all contact with the rich spiritual inheritance which Christianity has preserved for us?

Such a survey of the great movements of thought and enterprise in our day should convince us that a spiritual opportunity of exceptional magnitude lies before the present generation. We are just awaking to the full significance of the interpretations of the world which have been worked out during the past three or four centuries. We are ceasing to feel that we are aliens and pilgrims on this earth. We are rather planning definitely to shape and alter it so as to constitute it the permanent home for mankind. We are sure that for countless generations this world is to be the place where human lives are to encounter their spiritual fate. We have just become aware of the tremendous resources put into our hands for controlling the conditions of life by the use of scientific methods. We are beginning to realize that those physical elements which the mediæval mind distrusted as detrimental to the spiritual life may as a matter of fact be made to serve and to strengthen religious and moral aspirations and achievements. We are rapidly coming to see that wealth, which is indeed a snare to the soul so long as one has only an individualistic philosophy of life, is nevertheless an indispensable means for compelling nature to yield her resources to the upbuilding of social and personal health.

One who comes to realize the import of all this will feel the imperative necessity for incorporating into the Christianity of the future these very ideals which are proving themselves so inevitable and so beneficial. There is a latent moral and religious power in this secular-social conception of a better future for men on this earth which has yet to be revealed to our thinking. Something of the enthusiasm which accompanied the eschatological dream of the miraculous coming of the Kingdom may be aroused as we become acquainted with the marvels within our reach if we engage Nature to work for spiritual ends.

Now the theology which has been transmitted to us, and which has entered into our rituals, our religious education, and our evangelistic efforts was framed in a decadent age, when no moral enthusiasm could be derived from the actual outlook. Augustinianism took shape in the days of the decline of ancient culture. If men were to rise to the heights of religious achievement, they were compelled to leave behind the world, which furnished too little opportunity for the abounding spiritual life engendered by Christianity. Nothing less than the glories of the heavenly realm could satisfy the lofty ideals of those who had been transformed by the grace of God.

But lo! this world has taken on a different aspect since men have become accustomed to the use of exact methods of observation and have become acquainted with the possibilities open before us in the coming centuries. The early Christians kept their hope and loyalty alive by "looking for a new heaven and a new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness." For centuries men looked and prayed that this new earth might descend by miracle from the heavens. But the promise was fulfilled in a way which no one foresaw. Quietly and without observation the new heavens took shape in the thoughts of men. When Copernicus discovered that the earth on which we dwell is actually floating in the heavens, as truly as are the stars which men had formerly regarded as the abode of angels, he opened a new vista before our eyes. For if each day we are in the heavens from which was expected the revelation of God's truth and God's righteousness, we need not wait for the miracle of the great final catastrophe before we can enjoy the heavenly blessings. If we are here and now in God's heavens, we may at once discover what eye hath not seen nor ear heard. Humble, honest observation of the facts close at hand will disclose the secrets of the Almighty.

It has taken a long time to realize the positive significance of this "Copernican Revolution." But little by little, as men have employed the same scientific spirit which led Copernicus to his epoch-making discovery, the gates leading to the divine mysteries have one by one been unlocked. Today we take for granted marvels which would have seemed incredible to those who lived in the age of miracles. In former days it was counted a notable wonder that a few thousand Israelites should be enabled to cross the Red Sea and the Jordan River. To-day in New York, bridges and tunnels carry hundreds of thousands every day from one shore to another. The story of the swimming of an iron axe head upon the water was recorded as a special dispensation of Providence. But what shall we say of the great floating palaces of steel which now carry thousands of human beings in comfort and in safety from one continent to another! The scientific achievements of our day which we enjoy as a matter of course are marvels so tremendous that they make the petty miracles of olden times seem like child's play. Indeed, one of our favorite themes is to rehearse the "miracles of modern science." When a few years ago the steamship "Republic" was rammed in a dense fog, and all on board were in peril, the wireless telegraph summoned help, and the submarine telephone enabled the rescuing ships to steer in the right direction. Preachers everywhere pointed to that achievement as a "modern miracle." But it was really better than a miracle. If it had been such a unique provision as is implied in a miracle, men could indeed marvel; but when the next emergency arose they could only wait passively, hoping and praying for another intervention. As it is, every ship may have at its disposal the same means for summoning aid in time of distress. The "Titanic" no less than the "Republic" made known her troubles to surrounding vessels. We can count upon the service of the marvels of modern science as men never could count upon miracles of old. And yet, greater and more regular as is the aid of scientific invention, we do not account for it by assuming any contravention of the processes of nature. The God who must be worshipped by the believer in modern science does not distribute his favors in arbitrary ways, but gives freely to all who will avail themselves of the blessings of the resources of the universe which is so full of wonders.

But the traditional theology has anchored our faith and our ethical motives to the philosophy underlying that ancient world which was so poor in "natural" resources that it was compelled to seek special wonders in order to satisfy its needs. The revelation of God and the power of God to help were located primarily in unique interventions. The Bible was valued because it was believed to have come into existence by a method of inspiration which no other literature could claim. The salvation of one's soul was believed to be possible only as divine grace was imparted in the unique supernatural efficacy of the sacraments. The outcome of salvation could not find worthy expression in this wretched world, but must demand the withdrawal of man from attachment to the things of sense. The God defined in the mediæval theology, in spite of the high-sounding attributes attached to his name, was a being the exercise of whose power was, with the exception of a few miracles, limited to the meagre possibilities which a pre-scientific age discovered. Christian sentiment has been slow to realize that our modern "natural" world is actually richer in possibilities than was the "supernatural" world of traditional religious thinking. What is supremely demanded is such an interpretation of the wonderful universe in which we live as shall enable religious faith to make positive use of the resources which are at hand in such abundance.

Modern science has unbound the sleeping giant of physical power. We have in our hands incalculable energy. We are attaining the scientific capacity to turn this energy into channels which shall achieve our ends. What shall those ends be? Shall the immense wealth of our cities be so organized that a race of men shall result physically and spiritually weaker than their fathers? Shall the splendid virtues of a sterner age give way to self-indulgence and luxury? Nothing can prevent mankind from sinking beneath the tremendous temptations due to modern wealth and power save the creation of a strong religious life which shall lead us to consecrate our control over nature to the process of bringing in the Kingdom of God. But such a religious life is possible only as a religious interpretation shall be given to this new world of our modern life and thought. To restrict our contact with God to a few isolated points of history means to perpetuate a religion far too small to give triumphant power over our richer and larger relations to the infinite possibilities open to us. It is imperative that we should correlate our religious thinking with the immensity of the issue before us.

Beneath the stirrings and seethings of modern unrest, one discerns dimly the outlines of a religion which shall trust in the larger future instead of being bound literally to the past; which shall glory in the capacity of man to use God's resources to remake this world instead of inculcating a passive dependence on supernatural forces which lie out of man's reach; which shall develop scientific control into a mighty instrument for the welfare of man instead of uttering warnings against the "dangers" of scientific theories. Shall that religion of the future be

Christianity? Or shall we who believe in the transforming power of the religion of Jesus allow the leadership to pass out of our hands? One who really understands the inner nature of our religion, which owes its moral strength to the forward-looking eagerness of the Hebrew prophets and the early Christian missionaries, which has shown itself capable of so many changes in form in order to maintain its spiritual supremacy, and which finds its supreme justification in the Master's call to the greatness of ministry, can but feel confident that when the modern situation once becomes plain there will arise a moral passion which will not be stilled until there shall be formulated a theology which will lend stability and power to the moral forces engendered by the new age. The moral vision is already becoming clear. The intellectual understanding of the new age is being completed. The religious interpretation of the new insight must speedily follow if Christianity is to fulfil its destiny.

IV

THE ETHICAL BASIS OF RELIGIOUS ASSURANCE

Religion lives not by the splendor of its organization or the logical perfection of its doctrinal system, but rather by its power to convince the heart. Without the assurance that religion actually brings men into vital contact with divine help, the most perfect system would die. A theology which does not evoke this sense of confidence is at best a mere scholastic bit of formalism. No theologian has any desire to continue to work over the details of a system which has lost its power to convince.

We have seen that the theology which was developed by the exigencies of the growing church in the first centuries of our era sought to bring assurance to men by affirming the supernatural source and the supernatural authority of the doctrines which were ecclesiastically approved. The resources of this present world did not seem adequate to secure the blessings which it was believed God was ready to bestow on his children. Therefore, religious hopes were anchored in that other world out of which was to come deliverance. The precious items of religious belief and practice were valued on the ground that they originated through a special providential dispensation. It was held that all the knowledge which we need for our salvation had been furnished to us in an exactly located and defined revelation. The divine help which we crave had been provided in the specific redemptive plan of God, which is made effective by the divinely authorized sacraments. The fears of men were stilled and their confidence established by the affirmation of the divine authority of the doctrines and the means of grace in which they put their trust. Thus ecclesiastical Christianity worked out a strong, consistent, easily understood and eminently practicable way of enabling men to realize the presence of God.

But our previous discussion has served to make it clear that, strong and splendid as is this ecclesiastical system, it nevertheless has not been able to retain its dominion over the vigorous movements of our distinctively modern life. As increasing knowledge of the world in which we live has revealed larger resources than were suspected in earlier ages, there has grown up an increasing confidence in the moral value of the truth disclosed by scientific research. But the ecclesiastical temper, accustomed to think of all virtue as included in the church, was naturally distrustful of any movement which subtracted from the total influence of the church. Thus there came into existence that prolonged warfare between the new science and the old theology which has caused such perplexity and has wrought such moral confusion.

In our analysis of some of the prominent traits of our modern life, we tried to show that there is in these modern movements a latent ethical and religious significance which is not clearly recognized because of our somewhat exclusive standards inherited from the church. Indeed, such strength have the modern ideals developed that they may become formidable foes if they are allowed to develop under the influence of a spirit of hostility to Christianity. Yet such hostility has been deliberately evoked by the attitude of the church in the past. A theological task of incalculable importance is that of bringing to light the latent religious values of those aspects of modern life which hold us so strongly in their grasp, but which we have not been accustomed to interpret in a religious fashion. If this task is to be prosecuted in such a way as to construct a vital theology, primary attention must be given to the basis of religious assurance. For, as has been said, a theology which does not embody an appeal to the moral conscience of men is impotent. The fundamental theme to engage our attention must therefore be that of religious assurance. Only as confidence shall be felt in the elements which modern history has made potent in our life can a theology be constructed which shall do justice to the situation. We must come to feel the value of an item of religion just because of its inherent moral and spiritual character. Whatever is worthy of our reverence should be revered, no matter whether it originates in an ancient literature or in a modern experiment.

Now the attempt to exalt the so-called secular movements of human history is likely to be construed as a relative depreciation of what has been held to be exclusively sacred. To suggest that there are utterances outside the Bible quite as lofty and significant as some of the ideas contained in the Bible is frequently interpreted to mean that the Bible is no better than any other literature; and since in the mind of the objector all non-biblical literature is uninspired, it is easy to jump to the unwarranted conclusion that one who finds a revelation of God in so-called "profane" utterances is "ruling out" the Bible. If, as is frequently the case today, the supremacy of Jesus is located in the wonderful moral and religious triumph achieved in his personal experience rather than in a theory of heavenly origin, the man who is trained in the ecclesiastical method of reasoning will miss the very items upon which he lays most stress, and will conclude that the divinity of Christ is denied, because it is not explained by reference to a distinctly supernatural origin. Thus one who attempts to emphasize the religious significance of "natural" and "secular" aspects of life and thought is compelled to guard himself against the suspicion of the traditionalist that such an emphasis is equivalent to a denial of the fundamentals of Christianity. To put this aspect of the theologian's task into positive form is impossible unless there shall be engendered a broader type of religious assurance, which is prepared to give a positive estimate to elements of experience which have not received ecclesiastical sanction, whenever such elements are intrinsically worthy of moral homage. It is only as men shall be ready to recognize the supreme right of what is ethically good to command their reverence just because it is good that we shall be freed from the narrowing effects of formalism.

In the following discussion, therefore, it should be remembered that there is no intention of disparaging the splendid achievements of the traditional theology. In suggesting modifications in method and in emphasis, the purpose is constructive. Any adverse criticism is inspired by the hope that the criticism may serve to reveal more clearly the great religious fundamentals upon which our confidence may rest. It is only as confidence shall be seen to have been founded on what is not today ethically defensible that destructive criticism will be necessary. That there have been fear and distress and weakening certainty in religious thinking during recent years is, I think, indisputable. The following pages will seek to suggest such an understanding of the causes of this weakening assurance and such a comprehension of the moral nature of an abiding confidence as shall enable us to see more clearly what the task of the theologian is if he is to lead the thoughts and aspirations of men in our modern world.

One more preliminary word may not be amiss. A remarkable transformation of theology is already taking place in response to the moral demands of our age. Apparently, the changes which are being wrought are coming to pass in a wholesome and gradual fashion so that readjustments may be made without serious interruption of the activities of organized Christianity. The purpose of the exposition which follows is not to impose a new dogmatics in the place of the old. Indeed, such a new dogmatism, appealing to the authority of "reason" or of "advanced scholarship" would be ethically more intolerable than a theology appealing to the more humanly universal authority of the church. What is attempted is to point out certain ethical implications of the transition which is in progress, so that in our attitude toward changing doctrine we shall not be applying criteria which can bring only perplexity and confusion. The scientific movements of our day keep theories purified from error by looking carefully to the methods by which these theories are constructed. Results are always subject to revision; but the revision must be undertaken by the use of an accurate method if it is to be of any value. Exactly so, the changes in theology which the theologian is to influence must be controlled by a clear apprehension of the methods of revision which are adequate.

I. THE DOGMATIC VS. THE SCIENTIFIC BASIS OF ASSURANCE

Primitive Christian faith was formulated in a non-scientific atmosphere. Not only was it true that Jesus and most of the early missionaries were not influenced by the science of the age; not only did practical rather than theoretical interests have first place in their religious thinking; as we have seen, a more important aspect of the matter is the fact that the early Christians did not expect this world to continue. The ultimate values were to be found in the heavenly

Kingdom. Under these circumstances, the facts and the principles of a world which was destined to speedy destruction naturally would not furnish material for religious assurance. That certainty must come primarily from an unseen world which was so far in contradiction to this present world that, when the fulness of time should arrive, warfare to the death was the only possible issue. In the course of time the principles derived from this heavenly source were organized into a theology appealing to revelation for its support. Indeed, Tertullian could triumphantly declare that a rational absurdity was really a positive reason for believing a doctrine to be true, if only it rested on revelation. Augustine was able on the basis of this heavenly authority to convince himself of propositions which before his conversion had seemed unreasonable. Gregory the Great declared that there is no merit in believing what can be rationally proved; only when, on the basis of authority, one holds to be true something which his natural reason does not validate, is there any moral value in the belief. We need only recall how Luther was constantly heaping scorn on the rationalizing efforts of the schoolmen, and how generally evangelical preaching even in our own day is suspicious of science, if not hostile to it, to see that for centuries Christian assurance has been formally based on a non-scientific, if not an anti-scientific foundation.

But coincidently with the growth of the secular interests of the modern world there has grown up a secular science, with a method of discovering facts which has increasingly commanded the confidence of mankind. We have already indicated something of the scope of this scientific movement, and have alluded briefly to the attitude of hostility which has been engendered between it and the appeal of theology to authority.

If we analyze this conflict, we find that it has its source in two fundamentally different conceptions of the basis of assurance. Theology has insisted that its right to a hearing lay in the fact that it proclaimed truths from a higher realm, inaccessible to human reason. The confidence of the theologian has rested on the belief that there have been given to man, without the mediation of inexact and tiresome processes of exploration, certain absolutely true principles which may eternally serve without change as the means of guiding life to its supreme goal. Morally one is bound to believe these principles because they are alleged to have been declared true by divine authority. Confidence is located in the infallibility and unchangeability of certain doctrinal theories, rather than in a human method of discovery. Modern science, on the other hand, proceeds on the hypothesis that the doctrinal results will take care of themselves, provided only the method of investigating problems is made exact. The assurance of the theologian has thus rested on the possibility of affirming the *unchangeable truth of certain doctrines.* The assurance of the scientist rests on *the possibility of verifying or of revising all doctrines by the use of exact methods of research.*

It is evident that, so long as the traditional conception of the nature of assurance is held, there can be no real appreciation of the moral significance of scientific method. For the theologian is trained to estimate the value of a man's work by asking what *conclusions* he has reached. For him the supreme moral duty is to hold as true certain doctrines. Even if the prescribed conclusions are reached by processes of doubtful scientific validity, the fact that the proper opinions are somehow held justifies the means by which they are attained. From this point of view, the only question which is asked concerning the work of a scholar is whether the conclusions which he reaches are in accordance with the revealed truth of the system. Any suggested alteration of doctrine is looked upon as a proposal to *weaken* confidence in the system, and therefore to leave religion less confident than before. Thus critical scientific procedure is described as "destructive" scholarship; and any findings which contradict the established theological system are lightly dismissed as the products of "science, falsely so-called."

The scientific attitude, on the other hand, is less concerned with results than with the method by which results have been reached. A man of scientific spirit would have his confidence seriously shaken if he noted that a given doctrine was supported by a method of investigation which could not be depended on for accurate results. If, for example, the doctrine of transsubstantiation can be affirmed only by the use of clearly artificial distinctions between "substance" and "accidents," the ultimate affirmation of the doctrine does not in the least reassure him. On the contrary, he is apt to ask himself whether the discovery of so vulnerable a type of reasoning in this case may not be symptomatic of dangerous superficiality throughout the entire theological structure. Thus an argument which might greatly encourage and reassure a man of the traditional theological way of thinking might have—indeed would be likely to have—precisely the opposite effect on a man of scientific temper. It is startling to think how easily unbelief may be engendered by some of the apologetics of our day which are intended to rescue questioning souls from doubt, but which by the superficiality of the method of defence serve actually to deepen the misgivings of keen inquirers.

Now, while it would be rash for any one to assert that the scientific attitude has taken complete possession of our age, it is nevertheless true that the definite purpose of our modern education is to instil this scientific spirit into our social consciousness. Indeed, it may almost be said that the scientific attitude is an inevitable accompaniment of democracy. For if we are to set rules for our own guidance, we must cultivate the most exact possible methods of discovering the truth. At any rate, as our modern enterprises develop, it is coming to be more and more apparent that success depends on the mastery of exact scientific principles of management. It has been discovered that even the traditional ways of laboring, which have been evolved through the supposedly superior process of actual practice, are not as efficient as those directed by carefully tabulated rules made up by minute and painstaking investigation. In order to obtain the best results, modern industry must adopt scientific principles. The farmer cannot raise the largest crops merely by stoutly asserting that American agriculture is the most productive in the world. Whether it shall be or not depends on his ceasing to seek arguments to uphold a predetermined conclusion. He must rather concern himself with the fruits of actual experiments. If his *methods* be correct, he need not fear for the results. If he has not acquired a moral respect for experimental science, his results will be largely a matter of luck.

Now it does not require a very violent shift of thinking to see that what holds true of agriculture holds equally true of theology. If scientific exactness of method rather than rhetorical and logical skill is essential to the best results in one realm, it is inevitable that the same attention to method shall be seen to be indispensable in other realms. It is likely that the increasing competition of business and industrial life will in the near future compel a very general appreciation of the importance of scientific research. Attention will be universally directed to the importance of learning from careful experimentation. Increasing trust will be felt in the use of scientific rather than rhetorical means of producing evidence. When this spirit of scientific discrimination shall have come to be more widespread, the way will be prepared for a general realization of the lack of convincing power of the arguments drawn from non-scientific presuppositions.

2. THE NEED FOR A MORAL VALUATION OF THE SCIENTIFIC IDEAL

The scientific spirit is now coming to be felt as a dominating force in the work of theological scholarship. Men who are the leaders of thought are actually working with the tools of modern science rather than with the tools of traditional dialectic. Biblical scholars are frankly engaged in the task of correcting traditional interpretations of the Bible, and are basing their corrections on the principles of scientific inquiry. Church historians are ceasing to view the course of history as a predetermined providential plan for the vindication of a given system of thought or a given church polity. Systematic theologians are making concessions and innovations in the realm of doctrine which would have appalled our fathers. The departments of practical theology are elaborating methods of scientific survey and theories of scientific control which make impossible the simple device of copying the New Testament church. The scientific ideal is gaining such control that it must be reckoned with as the approved method of formulating conclusions in the realm of religious belief.

But while this scientific ideal has been quietly taking possession of our best theological schools, there has been little consideration of the all-important question as to the effect of the adoption of this ideal on religious assurance. It is a well-known fact that men are staunchly holding to the older conception of authority in theology because they are honestly convinced that the adoption of the scientific method must inevitably mean a loss of religious fervor. It seems to them that modern inquiries are turning all the older certainties into question marks. Indeed, the number and the crucial importance of some of the questions which are thrust in the face of a theological student today are somewhat appalling, even to one who has adopted the scientific spirit and who is therefore willing to wait for the final answer until investigation shall have been more thoroughly made. To the man with the traditional type of religious assurance, however, who has been trained to feel that the eternal stability of the doctrinal content of Christianity is fundamental to its claim of supremacy, the problems which are being opened can but bring dismay and dreadful forebodings. It is indeed a serious thing to be compelled to ask whether the doctrinal formulations which we find in the New Testament are set in a world view which is discredited by modern science; whether Paul radically transformed the gospel of Jesus into a sacramentalism which we today cannot accept; whether there is any historical credibility to be attached to the fourth Gospel; whether the synoptic gospels misrepresent the life and the character of Jesus; indeed, whether any such person as the Jesus of the New Testament ever lived at all. These are surely questions the very asking of which seriously impairs the older type of religious confidence. We cannot wonder at the misgivings of many worthy men as they observe this dissipation of energy in the process of inquiry when they would like to see firm confidence established in the truths of Christianity.

The apparently "destructive" character of the inquiring science of today is due largely to the fact that often there does not appear in the patient and tentative work of the scientist any such religious loyalty as appears in the utterances of the man who is conscious that he is commissioned from on high to defend eternal truth. For example, why should it be thought to be religiously any better to believe that the

Pentateuch was written by Moses than to hold that it came into existence through an evolution stretching into post-exilic times? The conservative theologian is ready with his answer. He declares that there has been committed to him a sacred tradition to which it is a religious duty to be true. In this loyalty to what he regards as "God's Word" he is appealing to a profound moral motive. It is this which gives to conservative theological scholarship its hold on the affections of men. Scientific scholarship will battle in vain for the recognition of its conclusions in the church so long as it is not able to oppose to this spirit of religious loyalty an equally admirable incarnation of moral fidelity.

Now is it not true that the rights of scientific inquiry have too generally been defended on the secular and really irreligious basis of a theory of individual rights? The principles of "freedom of research" and of "freedom of speech," however important they may seem to the isolated scholar, do not make a large enough social appeal to constitute the basis of a widespread popular moral enthusiasm. Why, indeed, should we grant to the theologian freedom to destroy the foundations of the Christian faith any more than we grant to the anarchist freedom to destroy the foundations of patriotism? The real moral value of scientific method does not appear in the customary formulæ by which academic freedom is guarded. What Christian people generally demand, and rightly demand, is that theology shall be a vehicle for religious edification. It cannot thus be employed if it represent merely the spirit of individual freedom; for there may be lacking in such a spirit the fundamental social purpose which is indispensable to religious power. There are too many instances where the scientist is more eager to attain a reputation for daring innovations than to render social ministry. It is true that it is the opposition of ecclesiasticism and of other established interests to freedom of research which has forced scientists to magnify the importance of such freedom. But it has not always been magnified in such a way as to disclose the larger social purpose which alone can constitute a valid basis for a public approval.

Indeed, the very polemic into which a free science is thrust by ecclesiastical opposition has led to a confusion of the issue. Unconsciously the advocates of newer ideals have allowed their opponents to define the nature of the test of social efficiency which is to justify the existence of any movement. It has for centuries been assumed that the highest efficiency will be attained by the use of the doctrines which have been ecclesiastically approved. As has been shown, assurance has traditionally rested on the *content* of doctrine rather than on the *method* of deriving conclusions. Thus the natural challenge of traditional faith to newer thought is whether the outcome of criticism serves to confirm certain predetermined conclusions. For example, a theologian is allowed to use the doctrine of evolution, provided he can show that the evolutionary hypothesis is in accord with the teachings of the first chapter of Genesis. The critical theological scholar is thus expected to justify his work, not by showing its truthful character from the point of view of *method,* but rather by showing the *conformity of his conclusions* with Biblical doctrine. The very nature of this test prevents the modern scholar from bringing to the front the fundamental moral properties of his procedure.

Indeed, in so far as scientific scholarship yields to the test demanded by traditionalism, it is likely to be tempted into paths of doubtful probity. For in attempting to show that the results reached are "not essentially different" from those reached by the method of ecclesiastical control, the scholar is apt to give to his conclusions a form which shall resemble as closely as possible the doctrines which the traditionalist wishes to retain. But critical scholarship inevitably makes definite modifications in the realm of doctrine. In so far as these modifications are seen to be offensive, the exposition of them by one who accepts the ecclesiastical challenge is practically certain to abound in skillfully devised ambiguities which obscure rather than reveal the actual content of the theologian's thought. But if once the spirit of intellectual juggling be admitted into any procedure, it is no longer possible to claim a moral superiority for it. The New Testament itself reminds us that the double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. The scholar who attempts at the same time to serve ecclesiastical demands and to maintain scientific truthfulness needs to beware lest the demands of the two masters conflict and leave the servant in a situation where his loyalty to both may be seriously tested.

Thus it is doubtless true that the pursuit of scientific inquiry under the motives of academic freedom is actually a source of moral disintegration so long as the right of the ecclesiastical ideal is admitted as the final test. Any modifications of the authorized system will from the point of view of the ecclesiastic be judged as examples of a privileged laxity. And this laxity is accepted by the scholar as an academic "right" which he enjoys under the charter of freedom of research. If in addition there be allowed a spirit of ingenious juggling by which the newer science is made to yield something resembling the older conclusions, the sense of honor is inevitably dulled, and a prudent program of "policy" may come to control the movements of the scholar. Even if he succeed in asserting his freedom in such a way as to be scientifically honest, he is likely to be dismayed by would-be anarchists who hail him as the prophet of a new era of unbounded license. The very rigidity of the old-fashioned loyalty in the realm of doctrine involved a like rigidity in the realm of morals. If dissent from doctrine is admitted as a "right," why is not dissent from moral principles equally a "right"? Thus, by implication, the critical spirit may carry with it the conception of an easy-going individualistic laxity which would tend to actual moral disintegration. These dangers which confront critical scholarship we ought not to overlook.

Nevertheless, the time has come when we must recognize that, as a matter of fact, the scientific ideal is coming to prevail in theological schools. Intelligent people know that "criticism" is very generally taught in our seminaries, and that churches are admitting to their pulpits ministers who stand for the "new" views. If, in view of this fact, we still retain the notion that Christian loyalty means fundamentally the defense of certain doctrines, the inevitable conclusion in the minds of men will be that these seminaries and these ministers really do not care very much about loyalty; that they are indulging themselves in the pleasant occupation of making whatever experiments they choose in the field of religion without very much concern over the outcome; that they evolve new theories just for the fun of startling people and for the joy of indulging in academic debate. The papal encyclical against Modernism characteristically ascribes the work of the Modernists to two motives, *curiosity* and *pride*. Many orthodox Protestants likewise feel that liberalism is dominated by a shallow joy at stirring up things, regardless of whether they can be settled again or not. It is evident that, so long as such opinions can be honestly held and expressed, modern scholarship has not revealed the essentially moral principles of its procedure. If, at the same time, men know that our seminaries are dominated by the scientific ideal, there is grave danger lest a scholarly interpretation of Christianity shall be made more difficult to commend to the morally earnest men and women who are in our churches.

In brief, so long as we permit the test of *content of doctrine* to remain supreme, there is actual danger of moral disintegration; for every scholar and every minister who departs from the system is, according to this hypothesis, less loyal to the truth than are those who retain the system unimpaired. Every fresh modification weakens the hold of the system as such on the minds of men. And modifications are now becoming so many and so widely recognized, that loyalties are perhaps actually more generally weakened than we suspect. Does not the acquiring of a "liberal" spirit too often mean that the new enlightenment becomes the source of a practice of easy-going self-indulgence, so far as the church is concerned? The right to reject the system easily passes into the right to excuse oneself from any arduous participation in the work of the church.

Let us put the matter in a little different way. If we examine the inherited tendencies of our religious thinking, we discover that we have been carrying over into modern life the attitude of mediæval faith. As we have seen, for centuries men were conscious that they had no inductive method of discovering for themselves the highest truths and values. They found in the writings of antiquity a wisdom which they could not hope to attain by their own efforts. Naturally, therefore, they trusted in the content of the doctrine provided by the church as the custodian of ancient truth. The revealed system was the foundation of their confidence. Indeed, so meagre were the independent powers of scholarship during the first thousand years of Christian history that, if the authoritative writings of antiquity had been lost, the loss would have entailed the total extinction of culture. We still have that long-continued feeling of absolute dependence on the past reflected in the conviction of many men that if the classics shall not have the first place in our education culture will inevitably decline. From this point of view, our salvation is dependent on the faithful retention and repetition of the wisdom of the ancients. To hold fast the "faith once delivered" is the supreme duty because only in that "faith" have we the highest truth.

Now an important consequence of modern scientific procedure is to free men from this sense of helpless dependence on antiquity. The deeds and theories of men of the past are, indeed, of great value; but they are not indispensable. If the books containing the *results* of scientific inquiry should all be lost, it would not seriously dismay the modern inquirer, *provided only the capacity to use scientific method remained.* If men had mastered this *method,* they could after a few years of diligent labor recreate the lost theories, or perchance even improve on them. When Newton's dog overturned the candle which destroyed his mathematical papers, the loss was not irrevocable, simply because Newton possessed the *method* by which he could reconstruct all that had been destroyed.

Thus while the mediæval mind carefully treasured the *finished theories* on which it was so hopelessly dependent, the modern mind is more concerned to attain such a mastery of *method* as to be able, if possible, to improve upon the past. This, of course, does not mean that all value is denied to the past; on the contrary, since the perfection of science depends on the largest possible social cooperation, we can never have too much of the recorded results of other men's thinking. But the use which is made of these past products of thought is very different from that made by the mediæval mind. The scientist obtains stimulus and help from them, but he feels that he is nearest the truth not when he regards them as finally authoritative, but when he finds them of service in opening his own eyes. He sees that any theory expresses only in part and only imperfectly the truth which mankind seeks. It is the reality lying back of all formulations which he seeks to understand, and which demands constant revision of working hypotheses. The man who has attained the scientific attitude is not afraid of the "destruction" of anything. He does not fear lest culture will vanish if the study of Greek be no longer required of every boy in college. He is not dismayed when more careful investigations of the properties of matter disclose the inadequacy of the older atomic theory. He never thinks of demanding that a new hypothesis shall be proved to conform to traditional doctrines before it shall be allowed to prevail. He has attained a basis of trust which leads him to look forward with confidence, and which gives to transformations and revisions a positive value. The man of scientific spirit can live through changes of thought without perturbation, and can calmly make use of all tenable suggestions to enlarge the borders of his knowledge. Criticism is never "destructive" for him. It means rather the constructive process by which the borders of our knowledge are steadily enlarged.

It is high time that we should realize the steadying power of this newer type of assurance. It makes possible a change of theory without any serious disturbance of positive faith. It preserves one from panic, because of the belief that critical examination of facts and revision of theory are normal ways of making progress. There cannot be a wholesome revision of theology so long as the older type of religious assurance is insisted upon. For a theology which tries at the same time to preserve confidence in a finished system and to make use of scientific methods is hopelessly divided against itself. The retention of the older sort of assurance means that whenever scientific truthfulness compels a departure from the system, that departure is apologized for in such a way as to destroy the moral value of the change. It is viewed as an unwelcome "concession" rather than as a positive means of improving our status. The attempt is made to anchor faith to that portion of the field which does not need any new interpretation rather than to the total knowledge which we possess. Such a division of the territory of experience is unfortunate. A vigorous religion must possess *all* of life; but this is impossible so long as science is regarded as irreligious. Not until there shall be a religious trust in the truth-seeking quality of critical procedure can we advance to a theology which shall be inspired by the spirit of eager moral courage. "Mediating" theologies have doubtless served a useful purpose in gaining a hearing for the discoveries of modern science; but the time has come when they are likely to be so evidently embarrassed by the attempt to retain two such different conceptions of the proper basis of assurance as to lack that straightforward sincerity which alone can give moral power.

3. THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE HISTORICAL METHOD OF STUDYING RELIGION

The shift of emphasis from the traditional to the scientific basis is not so difficult today as it would have been a century ago. Indeed, so little was the religious consciousness of the eighteenth century prepared for the shift, that the scientific expositions of that age aimed at producing a new "absolute" religion of reason. The older rationalism had not really mastered the moral implications of the scientific point of view. To hold to God, freedom, immortality as undeniable dogmas of reason seemed necessary.

But the adoption of the historical spirit in the study of religion has freed us from the rationalistic dogmatism of the eighteenth century as well as from the ecclesiastical dogmatism of earlier times. It has brought into our consciousness the real relation between doctrine and life, between theory and experienced reality. It has brought to light the fact, which was not formerly appreciated, that doctrines are constantly changing in form or in interpretation as the experiences of men change. The progress of biblical criticism has made it possible to see the process by which the religious ideas of Israel changed during the centuries of religious experimentation covered by the literature of the Old Testament. We are beginning to seek such an account of the New Testament doctrine as shall show the genetic relations between the various stages of development. We are thus becoming accustomed to the thought that the vitality of the biblical theology is due to the fact that it was wrought out by arduous experiment, in which searching questions were asked and answers were found with the help of all the resources at the command of the leaders of thought. The moral quality of the Old Testament utterances is due to the fact that they represent attempts to meet the stern realities of Hebrew national and social life squarely and to discover the religious significance of contemporary events. In so far as we find in the Bible the record of a less direct type of thinking—i. e., in so far as we find traditionalism—we discover a theology which was denounced by the prophets and by Jesus and by Paul, and which possesses no power to awaken our own religious assurance. The historical study of the Bible, embodying as it does the scientific spirit and method, serves to reveal the fact that those convictions which possess the most power over us were wrought out in a way not incompatible with the scientific spirit of today. In giving a historical valuation of biblical material, we inevitably take as our test the actual social efficiency of the doctrines in their age rather than their conformity or non-conformity to a previously fixed system. Thus we are becoming accustomed to a point of view which enables us to use the biblical material precisely as the scientific scholar uses any documents of the past in his field. The way is splendidly prepared by modern biblical scholarship for that transformation of the conception of religious assurance which is now imperative. The men of the Bible had to test doctrines by their actual outcome in experience. Their test was in later theology supplanted by a formal appeal to authority. To restore the actual test which entered into the making of biblical doctrines is the natural outcome of a better historical understanding of the Bible. Jeremiah reversed the teaching of Isaiah concerning the fate of the temple at Jerusalem because in Jeremiah's day conditions had so changed that the test of experience demanded a revision of Isaiah's theology. Paul eliminated circumcision from the requirements of gentile Christianity, not because he found any written command to that effect, but because the religious welfare of the gentile world demanded it. When once it is clearly seen that we have in the Bible a changing theology to meet the changing needs of men we may readily gain confidence in a theology which does not profess finality or infallibility.

But the moral effect of this historical point of view is largely obscured by the retention of ideals of exegesis which belonged to the dogmatic method of exposition. The theory that in the Bible we have a compendium of ethical and religious commands in final and perfect form dies hard. It is becoming clear that the retention of this conception is responsible for much moral blindness in contemporary Christianity. Some of our most pressing modern problems arise out of circumstances which did not exist in the time of the apostles. The duty of a master to his slave is very different from the duty of a modern employer toward a free citizen whom he employs. The benevolent patronage of the master toward the slave is felt by a freeman to be lacking in true moral perspective, and it thus becomes an insult to a man's sense of self-respect. So, too, the stern denunciation of all worldly attachments, which was natural in an age which looked for the speedy destruction of this world, seems out of place in an evolutionary view. But these and other differences between ancient and modern ideals are obscured by a harmonizing exegesis which prevents issues from appearing in their clear light. Do not our theologies and our Sunday-school quarterlies often contain the sort of special pleading for which we denounce lawyers and politicians? We consider it a practice of doubtful moral quality when a corporation employs a lawyer to evade the meaning of the law by a technical interpretation which will give the desired liberty under the guise of legal conformity. Yet in the next breath we may praise the theologian who has the dexterity to show that the first chapter of Genesis, when "rightly interpreted," will yield a modern cosmology; or we may feel very comfortable if it can be ingeniously made out that the precise type of church polity which we prefer was authorized by Jesus himself. It would mean a distinct clearing of the moral atmosphere if we should adopt that attitude toward the Bible and toward the history of Christianity which is made imperative by historical study, and admit the inevitable historical limitations of any particular theological doctrine. To expound honestly a biblical doctrine is the best possible preparation for the honest facing of the problems of our own day.

The reason why Christian teachers and preachers are so hesitant about the new attitude is to be found partly in the fear that such a position would be taken to mean the discrediting of the Bible. It is often assumed that the new position is less eager than the old to preserve that religious power which the knowledge of the Bible is instrumental in producing. It is to be hoped, however, that the days of ignorance which are responsible for such an inference are numbered. The accurate knowledge of the Bible itself should reveal the fact that nothing is more unbiblical than to refuse to face the facts. Does not the message of the great prophets owe its power to this facing of the facts in defiance of tradition? Did not Jesus always insist that moral and religious conclusions should rest on a truthful estimate of the situation confronting a man rather than on the rules formulated in the traditions of the scribes? Did not Paul, because of the new situation which he met in the gentile world, revise the Christianity of the primitive church? It is high time to emphasize the real significance of this splendidly moral spirit of the greatest of the biblical characters, and to deliver men from the unfounded fear lest we shall be dishonoring the Bible by adopting the very attitude of moral sincerity which constitutes its greatness. There is no reason why the influence of the Bible should be opposed to the influence of scientific inquiry. There is every reason why they should work in harmony.

Such a harmony is established by the historical interpretation of the Bible. Indeed, when the biblical literature is thus read, it becomes a vast social historical laboratory where we may trace the processes by which a supremely moral theology came to prevail. When one has mastered this field by the use of the historical method, one has already acquired the kind of confidence which belongs to scientific method. One finds that the magnificent utterances of that literature—so high and noble that they stand as the supreme expression of an ethical religion—were produced by the persistent experimentation of men in their endeavor to discover the will of

God. The attitude of the great prophets is not at all inconsistent with the method of scientific procedure today. They found men satisfied with a traditional cultus. But they faced the ugly facts of social life in their day, and asked what could be learned from a truthful survey of those facts. To be sure their means of diagnosis were not identical with those of our day. But their attitude toward the problems which needed solution was such that it compels the admiration of every man who is searching for the truth. Indeed, we might almost formulate their method in terms which modern science could accept, if we were to say that insight into the facts before us is a more direct and certain way of arriving at the truth than is the mere repetition of a solution formulated in the past. Just as the scientist would be able to recreate the content of his science even if all existing text-books were swept away, so the prophets of Israel would have been able to set forth religious beliefs in cogent form even if the content of tradition had been lacking in exact doctrinal form. They were possessed of such insight that they knew that God spoke to them directly in the facts with their moral challenge. The power with which Jesus compelled the experience of men to furnish answers to religious questions is conspicuous in the great parables.

Thus the direct outcome of the historical study of the Bible is the acquiring of a trust in that attitude of open-minded inquiry which is at the same time characteristic of the great biblical characters and of the modern scientific mind. It is this attitude which is even more important than the doctrinal results attained by critical study, significant as these are. The great constructive outcome of modern biblical study is not to furnish the theologian with a new set of authoritative dogmas, but rather to indicate the fact that the historic genesis of doctrines can be traced by scientific means, so as to make scientific method a positive element in the study of religion. Biblical criticism makes it possible for us to see how doctrines have their rise, why they change, what changes are for the better and what for the worse, and what the place of formal belief is in the total religious life of men. Tradition thus becomes a servant of the present and not its despot. If it becomes evident that changed conditions of modern experience require a changed emphasis or a changed interpretation, the theologian in making the necessary alterations may learn from the prophets and the apostles the spirit of reverence and loyalty which is indispensable to actual constructive work. The power of the message of Jeremiah lies precisely in the fact that he did *not* attempt to keep unchanged the theology of his day. Yet, in the very changes which he proposed, he felt that he was more loyal to God than were his opponents.

There is still altogether too much of the older feeling that the result of biblical study should be to establish an absolutely true and unchanging system of theology. Critical scholarship is constantly being urged to give the "assured results" of modern investigation, the implication being that a new authoritative dogmatics may be established to supplant the older. Indeed, many a man is excusing himself from bothering about critical scholarship at all until he can feel that the critics are "agreed" as to content of doctrine. In so far as this attitude is maintained, the entire moral significance of the critical method is lost. For this would leave men still dependent on a guaranteed *content* of theology rather than on a reliable *method* of ascertaining the meaning of religion. No one who really understands the nature of biblical criticism can have any desire to see a new set of "critically established" dogmas come to exercise authority in the place of the "orthodox" dogmas. A new theology of this dogmatic sort would not really mark much advance. It is far more imperative to attain a new *attitude* toward religious beliefs and a new *method* of constructing satisfactory formulations of the great convictions of the human heart. Indeed, the critical attitude may make one actually more appreciative of the content of the older theology. When one really understands the cost in fidelity and in moral earnestness of some of the great doctrines of the church, one will come to think of them not merely as formal doctrines, but as the repositories of deep spiritual achievements which must forever command our reverence. To get back of the "absoluteness" of doctrines as such and to learn to find in them the great spiritual aspirations and struggles and triumphs of noble men of old must give a new significance to theology. At the same time such appreciation makes us eager to secure in our day and generation a vigorous life expressing itself in suitable doctrines rather than to preserve the "form of sound words."

Thus the historical understanding of the Bible brings into the religious thinking of our day a keener insight into the human problems which found their solution in the biblical doctrines. The experience of biblical men and the characteristics of biblical social life become more interesting and more significant than are mere doctrines as such. This new appreciation harmonizes admirably with the modern spirit of social analysis, which is responsible for the moral challenge of our day. If there can enter into Christian theology this confidence in the outcome of a direct investigation into the facts of life, the way will be open for such a cooperation between the awakened social spirit and the work of the theologian that our religion will be immensely strengthened both in the theologian's sense of inner confidence and in its value for leaders in the modern task of social regeneration. When once theology can feel the moral courage which comes inevitably from the scientific attitude, and can throw off the terrible burden of cautious ambiguities due to "mediating" systems and "harmonizing" exegesis, when theology shall be confident, as all other sciences are confident, that the strongest possible guaranty of the reliability of a certain position is the fact that it has been reached by accurate and truthful observation and induction, then we may look for an era of new power; then we may expect to see Christian convictions again standing foremost in the moral conflict, instead of needing to be "conserved" by the watch-care of the church and the ingenuity of apologists. The acquirement of such an attitude of confidence is not difficult. We need only courageously to follow to its legitimate conclusion the method now employed in critical biblical study, and to correlate our religious beliefs to the sense of assurance engendered by the use of the scientific method.

V

THE ETHICAL TRANSFORMATION OF THEOLOGY

We have finally to inquire what will be the results if we make a thorough-going use of the principles which have been elucidated. What changes in doctrinal emphasis and in the content of theology may be expected if the theologian take it for granted that his task is not to reproduce an authorized system, but rather to meet the moral challenge of his day by employing the method of critical investigation which is so characteristic of our modern culture?

It will have been evident from the foregoing discussion that the ethical principles of the traditional theology were essentially aristocratic. That theology was worked out in days when men were conscious that human institutions and activities were hostile to the Kingdom of God. The secular powers seemed to be in the hands of those who had ideals incompatible with the splendid dreams of righteousness inherited from the prophets of Israel and reinforced by the teachings of Jesus and of his disciples. It was natural, therefore, that the appeal of religion should be away from the powers of this world to a heavenly tribunal. Since the ways of God were not the ways of men, nor his thoughts their thoughts, a dualism between worldly principles and the principles of the Kingdom was presupposed in all theological thinking. The ideals of the Kingdom were to be defended because of their divine rights rather than simply because of their compatibility with earthly life. The Christian who accepted the plan of salvation could be rescued from the evils of this life and made a citizen of the heavenly kingdom. From this vantage ground, he could look down on the ethics of the world, and could speak to his fellow men with the authority of one who shares the divine rights belonging to the Kingdom of Heaven. This note of authority is an inalienable element in the older theology.

Such a dualism involves the formulation of theology in terms of aristocratic privilege. The members of the church are by virtue of the fact of such membership raised above their unchurched brethren, and can look upon these latter as unfortunates. The "goodness" of those in the church is not so much a personal achievement on their part as it is a gift of divine grace. Christians become "heirs" of a spiritual estate which they themselves did not create. Their salvation is a "gift" from God. Man in his natural state is an outcast, when judged by the standards of the church, for he has not yet been initiated into the select circle of God's elect. For such a man to take pride in his own moral achievements was a mark of unfitness for the Kingdom. One must rather confess his utter worthlessness and his total inability to live the life demanded by the authoritative standards. The way of salvation lay through the humble acceptance of the grace furnished through the plan of salvation.

This disparity between "natural" efforts on the part of man and the "supernatural" means of salvation made it inevitable that the crucial points in a theological system should be the miracles by which the limitations of natural capacity should be transcended. Men were delivered from despair by the possibility of trust in the miracle-working church with its means of grace. The church assured them of a miraculous revelation from heaven on the basis of which the validity of the details of revealed religion could be asserted. The church furnished the ritual through which baptismal regeneration might transform a son of Adam into a citizen of the Kingdom. In the church one found the perpetual miracle of transubstantiation, which enabled men to come into the actual presence of the divine substance of Christ's redeeming flesh and blood. At shrines miraculous deliverance from sickness could be attained through the efficacy of relics. And back of all the present miraculous aid furnished through the church stood the vision of the great second advent when the powers of this world were to be brought to an end by the irresistible might of the heavenly King. These are essentials of Catholic theology. Without them the system would be hopelessly disintegrated, no matter how great might be the stress on moral and social interests.

Protestantism inherited from Catholicism this same emphasis on miracle as the essential thing in a theological interpretation of life. To be sure, the Catholic doctrine of the church was radically modified; but this only meant a more rigid doctrine of the supernatural character of the Bible as the sole divine authority. The conception of "natural" man as corrupt and unworthy, the belief in the necessity of a miraculous transformation through regeneration, the representation of Christian goodness as something bestowed upon one from a higher realm rather than as something worked out from within, and the retention of the eschatological view of history all marked Protestantism.

I do not mean to imply that this conception of theology made it unethical. On the contrary, so long as men did their thinking in terms of aristocratic distinctions, a theology which represented the relations between God and man in aristocratic terms would seem profoundly moral. As a matter of fact, the history of Calvinism is ample proof of the deep moral vitality which may spring from precisely this conception of theology. Wherever men today do their thinking in terms of class distinctions, the orthodox theology almost always is retained in its full vigor. The "upper classes" in Europe and the peasantry are loyal supporters of the state churches. Whenever it seems morally admirable for a member of one social order to exercise benevolent patronage toward his inferiors, and wherever it is possible for a humbler man to accept gratefully benefits from above without any sense of personal indignity, aristocratic ethics will, of course, prevail. But when democracy advances so far as to call in question the moral right of the older class distinctions, the ethics of aristocracy is sure to be challenged. In so far as theology embodies aristocratic principles, it, too, meets with adverse criticism.

Now the total effect of those movements of thought and of social activity which make up what we call the modern world is to turn attention to the resources of this world, and to discover moral values in the immanent processes of human evolution. The intellectual correlative of this modern democratic movement is the development of scientific method as a tool which may be freely used by any one to ascertain the truth and to further one's welfare. The moral objection to miracle on the part of science lies in the fact that miracle removes the control of the miraculous event from human hands, and makes men dependent on the unrestrained will of a superior being. Thus the eighteenth century, which saw the great revolt of democracy against the arbitrary rights of political sovereigns, witnessed also the revolt against miracles; for these represented the same sort of arbitrary rights in the realm of religion. In the development of politics, the older aristocratic philosophy has almost entirely vanished. The powers of government are now admittedly referred to immanent sources of authority. The ruler may retain his right to rule only so long as he cooperates with the people in the social task of promoting the total welfare. In the realm of religion, however, the traditional principles of established authority have delayed the process of transformation. Consequently, we have had attempts to mediate between the old and the new in the hope of doing justice to the moral demands of the present without impairing the authority of the established system.

Nevertheless, one who compares the theological treatises of today with those of a century or more ago cannot fail to be struck with the very considerable modifications which have been made at the behest of this democratic ideal. Miracles have gradually declined in importance until today it is almost universally true that instead of being the main supports to faith they require defense themselves. In other words, we are coming more and more to feel that the best credentials for religious faith are to be found in the service which is rendered to humanity in ways which humanity can understand and by methods in which humanity can have a share, rather than in superhuman claims. If we look at the actual development of religious life, we witness several significant ways in which Christian experience has detached itself from the former supernatural interpretation of ritual or creed, and has adopted, or is in the process of developing, interpretations which embody the immanent emphasis of democratic moral ideals. Merely to rehearse the list of such modifications will reveal the fact that this ethical transformation of theology is farther advanced than many of us had supposed.

Take, for example, baptism. In mediæval theology its significance was found in the fact that it was the channel through which the regenerating grace of God found entrance into the human soul so as to effect the great transformation of the "natural" man into a "saved" man. But in Protestant churches, the tendency has been steadily in the direction of a repudiation of the doctrine of sacramental grace in its Catholic form. For Luther, baptism became primarily the seal of God's promise, deriving its value from the fact that in it God's ethical consistency was affirmed. Some Protestant bodies have regarded baptism primarily as a symbol of a moral transformation which may take place prior to baptism. Enlightened Protestants of the Reformed branch of the church would today scarcely argue that baptism is essential to salvation. The marks of Christian character are sought in the actual ethical and religious life of a man rather than in his having received baptismal grace. This does not mean that baptism ceases to be of value. It is retained as a genuine element in Christianity by practically all Protestant denominations. But the interpretation given to it is quite different from that furnished by the mediæval church. Its retention is increasingly coming to be justified by the positive part which it plays in the development of an ethical life under the inspiration of a vital faith rather than by appeal to authoritative "rights." If historical research should show that the older theories of the origin of baptism are not tenable, so that the appeal to its authoritative institution by Christ would be felt to lack cogent evidence, such a conclusion, which would be fatal to the traditional interpretation, would not necessarily affect the ethical interpretation which is becoming increasingly common. If baptism actually helps to make men conscious of the redeeming power of God, if it actually serves to deepen in the consciousness of the Christian the assurance of God's presence, its right in Christianity is sufficiently vindicated.

A similar development may be traced in the case of the Lord's Supper. For mediæval theology it was essentially the vehicle of a miraculous substance with life-giving power. But it is not an uncommon thing today to find even high churchmen emphasizing an ethical significance of the sacrament which is logically quite different from that inculcated by the doctrine of a "real presence." It is frequently urged that one of the chief benefits of the eucharist is so to impress the soul with the presence of God in this particular instance that, under the inspiration thus gained, one may learn to discern the divine presence everywhere. In the non-ritualistic churches the sacramental efficacy of the Lord's Supper is completely disappearing. It is coming to be regarded as a symbol of an ethical, mystical experience which is not absolutely dependent on the ritual for its existence. Whether the Christian shall participate in the Lord's Supper or not depends on whether he actually finds it to be spiritually helpful or not. Here, again, the changed interpretation does not mean the elimination of the ritual. It means rather that its religious significance is referred to its actual ability to serve religious experience rather than to any authoritative rights. There is no longer any miracle connected with the Lord's Supper in Protestant churches. But as a means of enabling the members of a Christian community to realize the unseen presence of their social possession of the divine Spirit, it is gladly retained as an element of Christianity.

The same transfer of emphasis from the thought of a miraculous origin to the recognition of a proved moral efficacy is evident in the changes which have taken place in the doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible. No longer do we feel it necessary to insist on the complete passivity of the human writers of the biblical books, so that it may be possible to assert that the Bible has a totally different origin from other writings. More and more are we seeking to bring the biblical writers within the circle of normal human experience, and to picture them as subject to the same fears and hopes as other men of their day. What constitutes their greatness in our eyes is their moral earnestness and their heroic persistence in facing the facts of life with the determination to realize the presence of God in dark places. The Bible is valued today because of its actual power to quicken our religious and moral ideals rather than because of any particular theory concerning its origin. The biblical writers take their place among their fellow men, claiming no aristocratic immunity from the common temptations and weaknesses of humanity, but revealing the possibilities open to men if only they will trust the leadings of religious insight and devote themselves to the moral welfare of their fellows. It is perhaps not without significance that this very democratizing of our doctrine of scripture has resulted in a new appreciation of the prophets of Israel, and has exalted the historical Jesus in such a way as to make him a savior for men who had failed to discover the meaning of salvation as it was expounded in terms of aristocratic relationships. That our estimate of the Bible has greatly changed is undeniable; but the newer estimate means that the spiritual power of the Bible is better enabled to enter into our modern problems and leaven modern life. Who that has learned the message of the prophets would exchange the enthusiasm for social righteousness which is kindled by contact with these seers of old for the traditional habit of finding in the prophecies miraculous knowledge of future events? Just in so far as we feel the pressure of the moral problems due to our democratic society do we feel the actual leadership of those supreme religious non-conformists of ancient times, who believed that the direct summons of a social wrong needing to be righted was more valuable than any ecclesiastical claim or any ritual sanctified by authoritative usage.

Again, a notable change is coming over our conception of the nature of regeneration. When once the belief in baptismal regeneration is abandoned, the way is open for a conception of conversion which shall be genuinely ethical in the modern sense. It is true that Protestantism has to a large extent retained the picture of a mysterious transformation which takes place by unknown laws, and which has been frequently regarded as an inner miracle. But as we bring to bear on this experience the light of psychological investigation, and as we apply the test of ethical results, we are coming more and more to recognize that Bushnell was right when he contended for a method of becoming a Christian which should correlate the religious life with the processes of education in other realms. We see that men like Theodore L. Cuyler and Phillips Brooks, who never experienced anything which they could identify as a miraculous change of character, were none the less actually in possession of the secret of communion with God. Increasingly churches are depending on the natural processes of religious education rather than on the more dramatic methods of the public revival with its suggestions of the special and peculiar character of religious experience. The reality of the transformation of character when one becomes a Christian is as unquestioned under the new theory and practice as under the old. But the transformation is referred to immanent forces rather than to the intervention of an alien influence.

So, too, in non-liturgical churches, ordination has received an interpretation which transfers it from the realm of miracle to the realm of practical efficiency. Indeed, there are not wanting ministers who object to the practice of the laying on of hands on the ground that thereby it may be suggested to observers that some mysterious potency is imparted through this rite. Ordination thus becomes simply the symbol of an ethical fitness for ministering to men in response to the needs which Christianity can satisfy. The important thing is the minister's ethical sense of his calling rather than an appeal to a sacramental source of religious efficiency.

These instances of doctrinal modifications reveal the fact that there has actually entered into theology an ethical emphasis which finds abundant access to God without appeal to miracle. We have developed, or we are in the process of developing, such a degree of confidence in the morally honest use of God's universally accessible resources that the older type of dependence on miracle seems to be actually less secure. Who that has come to the symbolic and ethical conception of the value of baptism would wish to go back to the place where he would feel that a soul was lost if the rite of baptism had not been duly administered? Do we not today regard with pity the agonies of doubt endured by many an honest youth of former days, when he could not be sure that there had entered into his life any such supernatural transformation as was demanded by current standards? Are we not actually in possession of a religion of broader efficiency when we frankly recognize that there are purely "natural" ways by which the divine spirit takes possession of a man's will and aspirations? In an age when democratic opportunities for all men to achieve their highest welfare are regarded as morally admirable, the pathway to citizenship in the Kingdom of heaven must not be barred by aristocratic conditions. We cannot help believing that God cares more for the actual existence of a transformed life than he does for the means by which the transformation was accomplished; that he is more concerned that the church of Jesus Christ shall be an active aggressive force for righteousness than that it shall vindicate its claims to a specifically authorized origin; and that he would rather see the *spirit* of the prophets and of the apostles actually dominating the lives of men than to see them stake all on the validity of a specific theory of inspiration or of apostolic succession.

It is interesting and instructive in this connection to observe that, in many current discussions of miracles intended by theologians to make possible a belief in the miraculous as an essential element of Christianity, the miracles are shorn of those very qualities which serve to differentiate them from non-miraculous events. They thus lose their aristocratic privilege, and take their place in a democratic cosmos, where all events are to be treated alike. Two or three quotations from recent treatises will serve to illustrate this point:

"Science recognizes no single miracle because all the world has become miraculous." (William Adams Brown, Christian Theology in Outline, p. 228.)

"Should we not rather say, 'Doubtless God's relation to nature in this miraculous occurrence remains just what it always is?'" (Henry Churchill King, Reconstruction in Theology, p. 74.)

"Miracle is an immediate operation of God; but, since all natural processes are also immediate operations of God, we do not need to deny the use of these natural processes, so far as they will go, in miracle. Such wonders of the Old Testament as the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, the partings of the Red Sea and of the Jordan, the calling down of fire from heaven by Elijah and the destruction of the army of Sennacherib, are none the less works of God when regarded as wrought by the use of natural means. In the New Testament Christ took water to make wine and took the five loaves to make bread, just as in ten thousand vineyards to-day he is turning the moisture of the earth into the juice of the grape, and in ten thousand fields is turning carbon into corn. The virgin birth of Christ may be an extreme instance of parthenogenesis, which Professor Loeb of Chicago has just demonstrated to take place in other than the lowest forms of life, and which he believes possible in all." (Augustus H. Strong, Systematic Theology, Vol. I, p. 119.)

These quotations from widely influential theologians of today illustrate the change which has taken place in regard to the place of miracle in our religious faith. The dualism which made it possible to assign certain events to a higher order has vanished completely. "Doubtless God's relation to nature in this miraculous occurrence remains just what it always is." But the very essence of the traditional conception of miracle was found in the belief that in the miraculous occurrence God's relation to nature was *not* what it always is. When the virgin birth of Christ and the experiments of a modern biologist can be put on the same plane, class distinctions in the cosmos have been as completely leveled as were political distinctions in the French Revolution. Even if the word "miracle" be retained there is no room left for such a use of the term as is implied in orthodox theology. In the case of two of the above-mentioned theologians, the actual content of their theology and the actual structure of their faith would not be seriously impaired if it should be found necessary to deny the historicity of the biblical marvels. Man's knowledge of God, his relation to God, his salvation through Christ, and his religious life are expounded in terms which would require practically no changes in content if the possibility of miracles were denied outright. Their theology is genuinely ethical in content according to the standards of our democracy. Special privilege has vanished completely from their conception of the relations between God and man. One of them in the same book from which the above quotation was taken confesses his belief in the divinity of Christ in a series of propositions, not one of which necessarily implies a miraculous origin of Christ's personality. The significance of Christ is measured according to the ethical standards of our modern world, and is found to be such that belief in Christ's divinity is a moral duty just because of the ethical considerations urged.

The foregoing remarks will show that the ethical transformation of theology in accordance with the democratic standards of our day is actually taking place with great rapidity. Attention, however, should be called to one aspect of the matter, which deserves careful consideration. In spite of the fact that the content of doctrine is allowed to appeal to the moral sense of men for its vindication, and in spite of the fact that it embodies the ethical values of our modern democratic strivings, the fundamental presuppositions of the older aristocratic ideal are almost universally retained in modified form *as if* the validity of religious belief depended upon their retention. The terms belonging to mediæval theology are retained and adapted to the situation, *as if* these mediæval ideals rather than our modern moral convictions constituted the real basis of assurance. Some doctrine of inspiration is likely to be elaborated, so that it may seem that the utterances of the Bible are guaranteed by this special and unique characteristic rather than by their capacity to meet the deepest needs of men. Some sort of an apology for the miracles recorded in biblical literature is likely to emerge so that one's attitude toward the events recorded in this literature is different from the attitude toward similar narratives in other literature, *as if* faith really rested on a miraculous basis. The supremacy of Christ is felt to be endangered if it should be admitted that his marvellous insight and his incomparable life need not be explained primarily by a theory of transcendent origin.

In other words, while the content of our religious experience has responded to modern ideals so that we are really living in a spirit of confidence in the divine capacities of the immanent forces of our environment, we have not yet succeeded in defining divinity in accordance with the dictates of our religious experience. We still picture it as something essentially belonging to an "other" world, and needing to be brought into this world by a special process. We feel that, in order to recognize it, it must be so set apart from the "natural" order that it shall appear as something unique. But, at the same time, we are compelled by the scientific and the moral demands of our culture to pare down and to modify those miraculous characteristics which formerly stood as the signs *par excellence* of divinity. The next step in the development of an ethical theology must be the translation of the categories of divinity into terms compatible with democratic ethics. We must learn to think of God as the immanent co-worker always toiling with his children rather than as the sovereign to whom they are subject, and from whom they receive special benefits and favors as from a patron. The salvation which God makes possible must be interpreted as a process of co-operation with God rather than as an endowment from another realm. That this may involve considerable modifications even of our already modified theology is quite probable; but, having begun the transformation, why should we halt until we have succeeded in adapting our religious formulæ to the actual exigencies of life?

Perhaps the most significant step in the direction of such an ethical transformation as has been suggested is to be seen in the modern emphasis in setting forth the nature of Christ. The ancient and mediæval conception of divinity is revealed in the items which find a place in the creeds of the church. If we take the Apostles' Creed as an example, we find that the divinity of Christ was most clearly seen in his supernatural advent, in his suffering and death with their mysterious redemptive efficacy, in his miraculous resurrection and ascension, and in his expected miraculous second advent. Divinity was pictured as something transcendent; and the divinity of Christ was located in those aspects of his life and character which removed him from the natural order.

Now if we examine the Christological discussions of the past century, we find an increasing eagerness to discover the significance of Christ *precisely in that region which is passed over in absolute silence in the Apostles' Creed.* Who today does not wish that we might have access to reliable sources of information concerning the years of Jesus' boyhood and youth? What an inspiration such an account would be to the boys and girls who now find it difficult to be genuinely interested in the doctrinal interpretations of Christ which characterized the early centuries! How eagerly we are seeking to reconstruct for ourselves from the fragmentary records of the gospels a picture of the ethical religious life of Jesus! The past century has witnessed the gradual retirement of emphasis on the virgin birth, on the nature miracles and on the eschatological advent, and the increasing interest in the life of Jesus as a citizen of this world. When

Schleiermacher, with his prophetic understanding of the nature of modern religious demands, undertook to set forth his Christology, he explicitly declared that every item of the Apostles' Creed was inadequate to express the content of modern belief in the divinity of Christ. That divinity was not to be located in external marks, for the God whom Schleiermacher knew was not external to the world. The divinity of Christ must rather be sought in the God-consciousness which dominated his life. It is only as we share this God-consciousness and thus discover God within our life, that we can confess our belief in the divinity of Christ in any religious sense. The salvation which we may have through Christ is located in the social power of the Christian community to transmit from generation to generation the God-consciousness which is possible because of the moral courage and the spiritual insight created by our acquaintance with Christ. Schleiermacher thus expounds the most precious truth of Christianity—that truth which, because of its supreme value, has been put into terms of a transcendent miracle—as an ethical social experience, which does not need the support of the traditional miracles, and which, indeed, could not be adequately interpreted by the appeal to such miracles. It is true that Schleiermacher still retained a vestige of the older dualism when he insisted that this God-consciousness of Jesus, which is the source of the religious transformation of the ideals of men, must be referred to an alien source. But it requires only a little study of his theology to see that his Christology and his conception of salvation would not actually be impaired if this transcendent reference were eliminated. When God is conceived as a living, immanent power, so that, as Schleiermacher said in his famous Discourses on Religion, every event, no matter how common, becomes miracle to one who has felt the reality of the immanent divine presence, it is not necessary to go outside of the "natural" realm in order to find God. Indeed, from this point of view, the divinity of Christ may appear more significant if it be shown to have sprung from the apparently unpromising level of purely human and purely natural processes, exactly as the greatness of Lincoln has peculiar value for us because he started with no aristocratic advantages over other boys in our republic.

It is this new conception of divine immanence which makes the newer "liberalism" different from Deism and its historical daughter, the older Unitarianism. So long as the natural order was conceived as Godless, needing some special intervention in order to assure men of the presence of divine power, the reference of the essentials of religion to a "natural" source would seem to be equivalent to a denial of the divine power of those elements. Baptism must possess supernatural potency; the Lord's Supper must embody a "real presence"; the Bible must have originated through a unique operation of the divine spirit in the minds of the writers; the church must have a definite charter from Christ; the ministry must receive the special unction of the grace of ordination; and Jesus himself must have come from another world. But if once our conception of

God be so modified that he becomes the ever-present immanent Spirit, we need no interventions from an alien world in order to be sure of the divine presence. The reference of elements of our religion to "natural" sources does not necessarily involve a denial of their divine potency. It is quality, not metaphysical origin, which determines the matter. The test is ethical rather than cosmic; and since, in our democratic thought, lowly origin is not incompatible with the achievement of supreme moral values, we are not disturbed by the suggestions of historians and scientists that some of the most precious articles of our faith may have had a less dramatic origin than was once supposed. For in this wonderful world with its infinite resources there is room for all that the human spirit holds dear. God is found working his marvels of transformation in the many varied processes of growth which lead to beauty and to moral life and to worship. Nothing is to be despised which leads to awe and reverence and moral aspiration. It is just in so far as this feeling for the immanent presence of God becomes a vital reality that the religious barrenness of the older "naturalism" disappears. The genuine mystic has always possessed more direct access to God than was possible by the pathway of carefully defined miracle and revelation. It is the fact of a broader mysticism today which makes antiquated some of the fears which are honestly expressed as men "view with alarm" the inroads of criticism in the field of theology. The eager response of thousands to even such vulnerable forms of an immanent theology as are represented in Christian Science and "New Thought" shows that the soil is ready for the sowing of seed which may grow into the fruits of profound religious living.

The moment one consistently adopts the point of view toward which modern science and modern ethics lead us, one becomes a humble seeker after God. If one comes to regard this world not as a hard and finished creation, but as a realm of infinite potencies, many of which we have not begun to appreciate, the most worthy attitude is one of optimistic trust in the outcome of patient and honest questioning as to the secrets of life. Just as we find by scientific research that the universe has all the time been waiting to reward man's quest by revealing the marvels which invention and discovery have brought to light, so we learn that the religious quest meets with abundant answer. We are, indeed, dependent on the mighty resources outside our little personal life for the blessing of our experience. Let us not think that the modern attitude involves a glorification of man's isolated powers. On the contrary, the steam engine and the telegraph make us acutely conscious of the limitations of our personal capacities. Let the train be delayed or the telephone wire broken, and our impotence is exasperatingly revealed. We are in practical life depending to an extraordinary extent on the friendly cooperation of the mighty forces of the universe to achieve our welfare.

So in the spiritual life, the modern spirit becomes acutely conscious of its dependence on the friendly cooperation of the immanent God. Prayer and aspiration and strenuous endeavor all become imperative. Linked as we are to an animal inheritance, we are nevertheless able to seek a higher life. Only as we shall be conscious of the reinforcement of our aspirations by the power which comes from communion with the unseen can we overcome temptation and rise to a triumphant assertion of our highest ideals. There is a mighty religious impulse latent in the attitude of humble and eager questioning which is becoming so common, but which has not yet received adequate religious interpretation.

Let us briefly put in contrast the older and the newer type of religious experience. Both recognize the imperative need of man for God. The older, however, brings one into contact with the finished theories and the established institutions which have been wrought out in the past, and asserts that, by learning the content of the doctrines and by committing onself to the authoritative power of the institutions, one may receive by special dispensation grace from another world, which will enable one to overcome temptation and enter into eternal life. The newer starts with the questioning mood rather than with the authoritative theories. It finds that honest questioning is sure to meet with an answer. It recognizes with gratitude and reverence the value of the answers which come out of the past; but it believes that these can always be verified, supplemented or improved by further questioning. Therefore, the religious life becomes an exercise of unceasing prayer, and God is discovered not only in the traditional ways, but in many an apparently unpromising place. The positive appreciation of other religions than Christianity confirms the sense of certainty that the religious quest is justified, and enlarges the vision of religious achievement. The history of Christianity, with its record of many an originally pagan custom baptised into Christian service, inspires the desire to see the secular movements of our day also transfigured by the spirit of Christian faith. Thus God is not adequately symbolized as a sovereign who decreed in finished form the details of religion. He is rather the immanent, living Spirit of truth and righteousness, who meets our quest with the resources of infinite love, and whose highest joy is found in cooperating with his children. If doubt comes concerning some of the traditional theories concerning his nature and his ways with men, it only means that we are again asking fundamental questions, which will receive their answer if we honestly and persistently seek the truth.

Life may be defined as the eager quest of an organism for something in the environment which will enable it to develop. The environment is absolutely essential. Religious life is the quest for the reinforcement of our highest ideals by the spiritual contribution from the environing universe. The supreme question for theology is to discover how this environment may be so correlated to the needy life that the fullest possible use may be made of the divine power. The theology of the coming generation will confidently and positively adopt this point of view which at the same time brings religious questioning into line with scientific investigation, and also satisfies the demands of democratic ethics by giving to the most lowly elements of historical and cosmic reality the free opportunity to command our reverence and our devotion if only they evince the spiritual qualities which are necessary. Thus there emerge from the tossing deep of our restless questionings certain islands of faith which perchance may some time be joined together into a grander continent of religious truth.

When the little babe is born into the world, so helpless and dependent, mother love is there ready to satisfy the wants of the little soul, eager to anticipate its needs. Who that had never seen it would suspect that the pleasure-loving life of a young girl would yield such a revelation of self-sacrificing love? The religious soul is sure that God here makes available for his needy little ones the resources of his love no less surely than in the theological plan of salvation. As the life of the little babe grows and expands, there emerge from its environment the satisfactions of its needs. The growing intellect finds the marvellous universe awaiting scientific formulation; and, in response to invention and construction, unseen forces cure our bodily ills, transport us in comfort and safety to remote places, and enable us to communicate with our fellow men in defiance of "natural" limits of space and time. Does it mean nothing that our physical environment thus ministers abundantly to our spiritual needs? Then when the sense of social need develops in the child, playmates and companions and heroes enter and enrich experience. As the craving for beauty stirs within us, lo! the colors of the sunset sky, the majestic grandeur of the mountains and the charm of human face and form evoke the art which so enlarges the spiritual life. Is there no religious significance in this wonderful enlargement of our vision? When, in the adolescent, restless longings grow into youth's ideals, there comes a divine discontent with anything less than the best, and nothing but a personal contact with God can satisfy the lofty aspirations which take possession of the opening heart. As sex consciousness arises, in that mysterious way which only lovers understand, there comes out of the unseen that great experience of a transforming love, leading to the religious sacrament of marriage, and to the family love and devotion which furnished Jesus with the best symbols for Christian relationships. When, in deep penitence for wrong committed, the soul seeks communion with a restoring power, the springs of moral achievement are again opened through the experience of God's forgiveness, and the former ideals are reconquered; but with the conquest come a divine pity for those who have fallen and an earnest desire to be used of God in making known his never-failing aid in times of trouble. When physical disaster overwhelms us and defeats the body, the invincible spirit whch lives in communion with the unseen Presence may rise supreme in the sense of a peace which passeth understanding. And when at last this little span of physical life is run, and the exhausted body can no longer serve the spirit, we can venture with trust and joy into the infinite mystery which has ever ministered to us so graciously.

Theology must interpret for us this varied truth of the uplifting experience of the environing God. An ethical theology, which in all sincerity asks the questions which are pressed from the hearts of men; which in its questioning uses fearlessly the best methods which critical science can furnish; which insists on no aristocratic privilege of definitely limited authoritative doctrines, but admits gladly to its precincts anything which compels the moral adoration of men; which learns gratefully from the past, but looks to a better future; which appreciates the service rendered by those conceptions of God and of salvation which have emerged in history, but confidently believes that the borders of our knowledge may ever be enlarged; such a theology will not be poorer, but will rather be richer than the ecclesiastical system. Did the mediæval church rejoice that in its one unique baptismal rite God's saving grace was mediated to men? We have not only the baptism of the church, but also the countless other ways in which the children of men are initiated into the great experience of love for the good and power to overcome. Have men in the past uttered their hymns of praise because, uniquely in the elevation of the host at the Mass, the real divine presence comforted and assured the hearts of devout worshippers? We, too, can feel the presence of God in the cathedral; but he also speaks to us words of comfort in the memories of a mother's love, in the influence of a strong companion, in the reading of the story of the life of Jesus, and in the call to heroic ministry. Has the church expressed its belief in the readiness of God to reveal himself, by formulating theories of the inspiration of scriptures? We, too, have those same scriptures; but we add to them the words of Augustine and Luther and Thomas à Kempis and Phillips Brooks. We are glad to admit any man into the list of inspired writers on one condition only, viz., that he shall actually make us feel the reality of the presence of God in our life.

The theology of today is rapidly developing toward this larger ethical ideal. The greatest hindrance to a confident advance is the inherited feeling that if the "vested rights" of the older systems are completely disregarded, we may lose our reverence for the ethical values which were embodied in the systems. The growth of a historical understanding of the way in which these systems originated and developed will, however, enable us to recognize with gratitude and admiration the splendid ethical service rendered by that interpretation of Christianity which took form in the appeal to authority and which educated men by subjecting them to the higher wisdom of the past. If we employ the test suggested by Jesus, when he said, "By their fruits shall ye know them," we must acknowledge our lasting indebtedness to the mediæval church. But the employment of the same test reveals the fact that in our modern age, with its new ideals and its democratic aspirations, the older formulations of Christianity are allowing large territories of human achievement to escape from the dominion of the Christian spirit; indeed, these same formulations are responsible for a tendency to revolt from Christianity itself. Thus the summons comes to a work of theological reconstruction which shall enable Christianity actually to make its contribution to our developing modern civilization. To feel that this work is not destructive, but constructive in the true sense; to feel that it is not less religious than the old, but that it is making religion more real for us—this is a primary essential. We need not apologize for our undertaking. The time has come when the secular forces of reform are crying loudly for the aid which can come only from a religious idealism. If Christian theology shall respond to this modern ethical summons, the day of its welcome is not far off.

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